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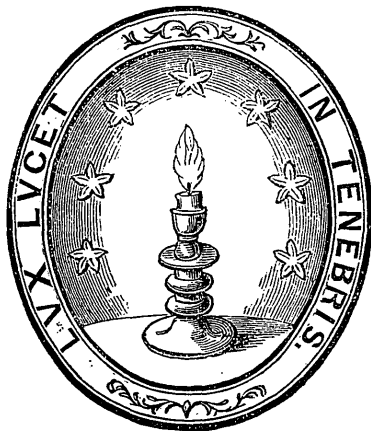
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THE ,
APOCALYPSE;
OR
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE,
EXPLAINED,
ILLUSTRATED AND PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED,
WITH
Historical and other Notes:
SHOWING
THE APPROACHING FALL OF PAPAL ROME,
THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS,
AND
SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST.



BY THE REV. W. STONE, M.A.

VICAR OF ST. PAUL'S, BROKE ROAD, DALSTON.

LONDON :
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P R E F A C E .

It was thought by the writer of this Commentary on THE APOCALYPSE, that a plain and succinct explanation of the whole Book, verse by verse on a popular plan, without discursive arguments which often perplex the mind, might be of service to Christian society in these "latter days" of the Church, to bring the subject more within reach of the general reader.

It has been, therefore, his endeavour, in undertaking and carrying out this work, with God's help, to keep as close to THE WORD as possible; without adducing numerous and varied opinions, which would only serve to distract the attention, and turn aside the thoughts from the obvious meaning of the text, as now generally received.

This last, and *now* the most interesting of the books of inspired prophetic Scripture—also, perhaps *the most neglected hitherto*—will be seen to comprise a kind of hieroglyphic history, under picture, symbol, and allegory, of the Church of Christ in the world, (and in that is contained *the history of all society*); extending from the great day of the *Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and from the close of the “Acts of the Apostles,” to the Second Coming of Christ in His Millennial Glory, and the consummation of the everlasting Kingdom, when “the tabernacle of God shall be with men.”*

It is the most precious Roll of PROPHECY which we possess. But, like similar portions of the inspired Word, it must not be expected to contain every thing precisely *clear*, or *consecutive*, as facts of common history. The nature of this prophecy rather resembles a pleasing “drama,” representing visions in various “acts,” not always in chronological sequence, but with interval and interlude; well adapted to relieve the mind and keep up the stirring effect of all the changing scenes to the “end of the

age" — when the present Dispensation is observed to amalgamate in the introduction of the more glorious future.

The "Revelation," delivered to the "beloved" disciple—the last surviving of the Apostles of the Lord, while suffering banishment on a desert island "*for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*" — has been handed down to the Church as a treasure of Divine Wisdom, the value of which it has been scarcely possible to conceive or calculate. And now it may be far better understood than formerly, on account of certain events fulfilling before our eyes, and others coming very near the time of their accomplishment.

Let the following pages be carefully and dispassionately perused, and considered in a calm, prayerful and uncaptious spirit; and the author feels sure, that the "Apocalypse" will be found most attractive, and capable of providing a *body of useful divinity in itself*. It will be seen to abound in sound Truths, in full harmony with "all Scripture,"—with Doctrines

and Duties, Hopes and Promises, Warnings and Encouragements of the most striking and practical kind — “*profitable*,” truly, “*for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” Only, let the reader *not expect too much*, nor look for the absolute clearing up of every obscurity and difficulty. This is impossible, and unreasonable to hope for in the present imperfect state of knowledge, human and divine.

Let us take, gladly, the measure of light and information, which God has been pleased here to give us, and use it for our spiritual good, as it is designed, and for His praise. “*The Day*,” which is coming, will “declare” and fully reveal every thing to our perfect satisfaction, if we “occupy,” in a proper manner, the gifts and talents now entrusted to us; remembering that, even in the account of one of the best taught of the Apostles, the present state is only as the *infancy or childhood* of knowledge and attainment. With all humility, and yet with laudable ambition,

let us look forward to the full and perfect "manhood" — the bright and blessed period promised,—and it may be nearer at hand than we imagine—when the entire "darkness" will be past, and "the true light" clearly shine! —when we, who now only behold as "through a glass" dimly and enigmatically, shall see "*face to face*;" and we, who now only "*know in part*," shall then "*know, even as also we are known*."

In conclusion, the author would earnestly remind himself, and each one of his Christian readers, that "THE TIME IS SHORT!"* The rolling of the chariot-wheels of Him who "*cometh with clouds*" may even now be heard

* The writer has endeavoured carefully to avoid the perilous rock, on which so many well-intentioned interpreters have split, of dogmatically fixing upon dates for *unfulfilled* prophecy. We are specially cautioned against this by our blessed Lord, (Mark xiii. 28—33, and Acts i. 7). If "the Son," Himself, as *man* on earth, was not to enter into or reveal the exact hour, day or year; how much less should *we* presume to lay down the precise *time of His coming*! Signs and tokens are given us of the *approach*—like the budding of the fig tree before summer — but no more.

in the distant skies ! The “ sign ” is not wanting which heralds the approach of the “ Judgment ” and “ the Kingdom,” — the downfall of the determined “ enemies,” and the glorious ADVENT OF “ THE KING OF KINGS ! ” —

“ To serve the present age,
Our calling to fulfil !—
O may it all our pow'rs engage,
To DO OUR MASTER'S WILL ! ”

*St. Paul's Vicarage, Dalston,
May 26th, 1869.*

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

THE DIVINE.

CHAPTER I. 1—3.

INTRODUCTORY. — TITLE OF THE BOOK. — ITS AUTHOR AND ITS GENERAL DESIGN.—PROMISE TO DEVOUT READERS AND HEARERS.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John: 2.—Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3.—Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

1.—“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,” means the Apocalypse,* or unfolding of that

* The Greek, “*Αποκαλυψις*,” for the word *Revelation*, signifies the drawing aside of a veil, the uncovering of that which was before in obscurity.

which before was concealed in the mind of God, and hidden from man ; and Jesus Christ being the great subject of it, from beginning to end, as “Head over all things to His Church,” “the Author and Finisher of our faith,” it is He who receives it from the Father, as the Fountain and Source of all wisdom, and imparts it to John, through the ministry of an angel, for the benefit of all the servants of God and members of His Church, in all ages and places.

The Son of God would do nothing in his *mediatorial* capacity independent of the Father. So it was stated of Him when upon earth, as a mark of obedience to the Father’s will in all things pertaining to the counsel, plan, and work of man’s redemption : “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do : for whatsoever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.”*

2.—The intention of this portion of God’s revealed will to man appears to be, to “shew unto his servants,” whether apostles, ministers or people, such things as should be deeply interesting and profitable to all ; especially as they would shortly begin to receive their accomplishment, and the series of all the great events relating to the

* John v. 19, 20 ; see also John iv. 34, and vi. 38.

Church and to the world "*must*" soon proceed to be fulfilled.*

JOHN declares, concerning this Revelation, as well as of the Truth of the Gospel which he had before testified† as a faithful witness for Jesus Christ, that he would now record nothing but what was taught and made known to him by the power of the Spirit and by the angel of the Lord.

3.—The record, therefore, which John was about to give was worthy of the highest credit and the closest attention; for a blessing would certainly follow all who carefully read and devoutly listen to the revealed word, who treasure up in their memories and hearts the awakening truths which these writings contained. The exhortation and encouragement to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" this valuable portion of Holy Scripture are urged and enforced by a repetition (v. 2.) of the solemn affirmation, that "The time is at hand;" as a motive to present activity and

* The *necessity* lay in the determinate counsels of Jehovah, and not in chance, or "of the will of man; but of God." See also Rev. xxii. 6, 7, 12, 20; Rom. xvi. 20.

† The statement, "Who *bare* record of the Word of God,"—in the past (aorist) tense—seems to refer to John's testimony in the gospel and in his epistles, and in his general preaching as a faithful evangelist and apostle. Others have applied the words to the present Revelation, which he was about to write. But it may be most in accordance with the mind of the Spirit to include both meanings. See John xxi. 24. 1 John i. 2, iv. 14.

diligence in hearing and keeping the Word,* and to awaken the most lively interest and vigilance in all who would share in the promised blessing.

May that blessing rest upon all who read with care and in dependance upon the Spirit's teaching this invaluable portion of His own inspired Word! That the ensuing revelation requires deep and devout attention there cannot be the least doubt. Many parts of the Holy Scriptures may be, and are, so plain,

“That he may run that readeth it;”†

yet this, it will be allowed on all hands, as the last of God's revealed purposes and instructions to man, abounds in most difficult and abstruse, sublime and wondrous passages and prophecies; shadowed forth in signs and symbols, in metaphor and allegory, in picture and hieroglyphic; needing the assistance of Divine teaching, and investigation of much sacred learning, to search, explain and unravel; so that we may admire the full wisdom of God's Omniscience, who designed it, and be led to exercise the patience of faith and the constant exercise of prayer for Divine grace and guidance.

May this rich blessing be vouchsafed to us, in answer to prayer! May “the hearing ear, the seeing eye,” the understanding and believing heart‡ be ours; to His praise, and honour, and

* See Matt. vii. 24; Luke xi. 28. † Habak. ii. 2.

‡ See Prov. xx. 12; also Dan. xii. 10, “The wise shall understand.”

glory, who first loved us and gave Himself for us; and who now, as the Great High Priest upon His throne, intercedes for each of His flock, as well as for His whole true Church, before the mercy-seat of the Father.

“ Father of mercies in Thy word
 What endless glory shines ;
 For ever be Thy name ador'd,
 For these celestial lines !

Here, the fair tree of knowledge grows,
 And yields a free repast ;
 Sublimers sweets than Nature knows,
 Invite the longing taste.

Here, the Redeemer's welcome voice
 Spreads heavenly peace around ;
 And life and everlasting joys
 Attend the blissful sound !”

REV. I. 4—11.

INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY.—SECOND COMING
 OF CHRIST FORETOLD.—JOHN'S CALL TO WRITE.

4 **J**OHN to the seven churches which
 are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you,
 and peace, from him which is, and which
 was, and which is to come ; and from the
 seven Spirits which are before his throne ;
 5.—And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the
 faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of

the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6.—And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7.—Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 8.—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 9.—I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10.—I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11.—Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto

Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

4, 5.—JOHN, addressing the Seven Churches of Asia, as directed, opens with the invocation common in the apostolic epistles.* He prays that they may have “grace” and “peace,” two inestimable Christian gifts, from the Eternal Trinity: (1) From THE FATHER, the self-existent Jehovah, who

“Lives thro’ all life, extends thro’ all extent,”

in time present, in time past, and in all futurity; God “from everlasting to everlasting;” the unchanging and unchangeable; the uncreated, and incomprehensible: (2) From the Holy Spirit, “before the Throne,”† as proceeding from the Father and the Son, with them to be equally worshipped; possessing the same Divine and incommunicable attributes; and having all spiritual gifts and graces for bestowal upon the Churches, in sevenfold light, perfection, and fulness of operation:‡ (3) From “Jesus Christ,” the “bright-

* See Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3, &c.; 2 Pet. i. 2.

† Regarded here, says Mede, not so much in His personal Unity as in His sevenfold energies.

‡ The term “seven” is frequent in the Apocalypse. We read of seven epistles, seven candlesticks, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders, seven last plagues, &c. There seems throughout Holy Writ something sacred in the number as denoting fulness, completeness, and perfection.

ness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person;" the Word which "was with God, and was God," "by whom also He made the worlds;" the "faithful and true witness" among men, declaring the will of the Father for men to believe on the Son, as the "Light of the world;" and "the Way, Truth, and Life," conducting to the "true God and Eternal Life."* Not only is Jesus Christ described as the "faithful witness," bearing record from the Father of Heaven of His true will concerning man, but He is known *in the flesh*, having become incarnate for our sakes, as "the first-begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." He suffered for sinners, the just for the unjust, and having given up His precious life a ransom for them, He burst the bonds of death and the grave, and rose again, being the resurrection and the life," and the first begotten from the dead," "the first-fruits of them that slept" to die no more; God the Father has given Him the sceptre over all this lower creation, in consideration of the sacrifice of Himself for the life of the world. The heathen are given to Him for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession. All kings are to bow down before Him, all nations to serve Him.†

* See texts bearing upon the proper Divinity of Jesus Christ as One with the Father, John i. 1—5, 8—14; viii. 12, 14; x. 30; xiv. 9—11; Heb. i. 1—14; 1 John v. 20.

† See Ps. ii. 8—10; lxxii. 11, &c.; Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2; Eph. i. 20—22; Philip. ii. 9—11; Coloss. i. 15—18.

6.—To this exalted and glorious Saviour the high ascription of praise from redeemed sinners is rightly due ; since it is He who has washed us from our sins in the cleansing atonement of “ His own blood,” and raised all that truly repent and believe in Him, to the high dignity and felicity of “ Kings and priests* unto God, even the Father ;” to reign in common with their Saviour over the New Earth, and to serve as a “ holy priesthood ” for ever in acceptable worship before the presence of God : To Him, with all worthiness, be ascribed “ the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

7.—The grand subject of the whole “ record ” of John in the Apocalypse is the final glorious coming of Christ from heaven in person, and His great victory over all the enemies of Himself and His Church. It reaches from the first chapter to the last. This coming was foretold and promised to the Church by the Lord Himself, by prophets, and by angelic messengers at His Ascension. “ I go (said he) to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”† The very *manner* of this second Coming was also pointed out, as here stated, both in Old Testament and New : “ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of

* See Rev. v. 10 ; xx. 6 ; Dan. vii. 27 ; Exod. xix. 6 ; 1 Pet. ii. 5—9. † John xiv. 1, 2.

Man came, *with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion,"* &c.; "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming *in the clouds of heaven*, with power and great glory."† "While they beheld, he was taken up; and *a cloud* received him out of their sight; and while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, *in like manner* as he was seen to go into heaven."‡ When he thus comes, "Every eye shall see him," even those "who pierced him." It will be very different from His first coming, in this respect; that the last manifestation of Himself will be visible over the whole earth; not only in Judea, where he first appeared, and confined, for the most part, his ministrations to the Jews, where he taught, and wrought miracles, and at length suffered death at the hands of his own people. But His Second Advent shall be attended with such outward brightness of glory that it shall be apparent to every eye and discernible over the whole habitable globe. Great, therefore, shall be the consternation among the

* Dan. vii. 13, 14. † Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. ‡ Acts i. 9—11.

“tribes” of Israel and all “kindreds of the earth,” at this effulgence of the Messiah’s Advent :

“ They shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
And they shall mourn for him
As one mourneth for an only son,
And shall be in bitterness for him,
As one that is in bitterness for his first born.”*

Many shall wail and lament because of the exposure of their sins in that day, for having despised and opposed so great and loving a Saviour and Benefactor, so mighty and majestic a Lord and King.

“ *Even so, Amen;*”† assuredly, it shall come to pass as it has been foretold, and, as it seems good in the Lord’s sight; this must be, also, the devout and ardent desire of every believing and longing heart !

8.—The Lord who is to come is Jesus, who was from “the beginning;” The First and the Last as the all-perfect Redeemer unto the end; who begins and completes salvation; equal in power and majesty with the Father, in his Godhead. Omnipotence, and eternal Existence. He it is who is, and who was, and *who is to come* in His own

* Zech. xii. 10; see also Matt. xxiv. 30, before referred to.

† This double expression (like “Abba, Father”) is both Greek and Hebrew, seeming to signify that Gentile and Jew should accord and act upon the solemnity of this great fact, of the Second Advent; see Matt. xi. 26; Luke x. 21; Rev. xvi. 6, and xxii. 20.

glory, in the glory of the Father, and with the holy angels* to judge the world in righteousness, and bring all nations into subjection to his sway.

9.—John, who had these visions, and was called to write these things, was, at the time of these remarkable communications at Patmos, an island of that part of the Mediterranean called the Ægean Sea.† He was there a prisoner in banishment, at the order of the pagan Emperor Domitian, the unrelenting persecutor of believers in Jesus.‡ It was, therefore, “for the word of God and for the testimony” which he bare to the Truth of Christ, that he was enduring his cross and patiently bearing his affliction. This he was ready to do, as a brother and companion with all the Christians to whom he wrote belonging to the kingdom of grace here, and looking patiently for glory to follow.

10.—On “*the Lord’s Day*”||—the first day of

* Coloss. i. 17; Heb. i. 3.

† See view of Patmos, as at present.

‡ This persecution took place (the second of a “*general*” nature) about A.D. 95. The despotic and savage Domitian died A.D. 96, when John was restored, under the mild and tolerant rule of Nerva, to his Church at Ephesus.

|| Some have thought that the whole subject of the Apocalypse appeared to pass before John in the twelve hours of the Lord’s Day. Some, again, refer the various visions to that period called “the day of the Lord”—the great epoch of Christ’s coming again. These are “*Futurists*.”



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the week, the new Christian Sabbath—commemorative of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, and foreshadowing the coming resurrection of all the redeemed, in "*the day of the Lord*,"—John was "in the Spirit," wrapt into ecstatic influence from the Holy Ghost; after the first effect of which he heard a shrill loud voice, as of a trumpet close behind him.

11.—It seemed no other than the voice of Christ Himself declaring, as before (v. 8), and afterwards (v. 17), His characteristic title of Divine Immutability and Eternity; and calling him to "write" in a book, or roll,* the things about to be revealed to him, and send the volume thus written to the "Seven Churches" of believing Christians then existing in Asia, planted by the labours of the Lord's apostles,† and specified by name—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Let us bless God that the wonderful visions imparted to John, and written faithfully by him, have been truthfully preserved and carefully handed down to us in the Sacred Canon of Holy Writ. We see how transcendently great and resplendent in glory is He who commanded these

* Rolls of parchment were then in use, as in the Synagogue. Luke iv. 17.

† Paul laboured in missionary work in proconsular Asia, and, perhaps, was instrumental in founding most of these Churches. See Acts xix. 1; Coloss. i. 6; Rom. xv. 19.

things to be written, and who is the First and the Last, the Originator and Finisher of our salvation, the eternally living, mighty and loving Redeemer and Deliverer of His people from sin and all their enemies. It may truly be affirmed of this, as of all other Scripture, "The prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* Let us treasure the precious truths which follow, and lay them up in our hearts, and meditate upon them, as we may do to our great comfort and edification, day and night.

Let us heartily believe in the Second Advent of Christ in person, and with the great power and glory which are given Him by the will of the Father, by right of redemption as well as creation. And, oh ! when it is proclaimed, "Behold, He cometh," and when the effulgence of His illustrious presence shall be apparent to all the world, may we be prepared to meet Him then with joy, and not with grief ! Let us see that we be not found among the kindreds and tribes of the earth impenitent, unbelieving, and opposed to His kingdom ; but among those, who, having mourned over our sins *now*, with humble and lively faith, shall then be exalted to His right hand among "the royal priesthood," who shall reign for ever with Him.

* 2 Peter i. 21.

“How transcendent are Thy glories,
 Fairer than the sons of men!
 While Thy blessed Mediation
 Brings us back to God again!
 Blest Redeemer,
 How we triumph in Thy reign!

 Gird thy sword on, mighty Hero,
 Make Thy Word of Truth Thy care;
 Prosper in Thy course majestic,
 All success attend Thy war!
 Gracious Victor,
 Let mankind, before Thee, fear!

 Blest are all that touch Thy sceptre,
 Blest are all that own Thy reign!
 Freed from Sin, that worst of tyrants,
 Rescued from its galling chain!
 Saints and angels,
 All who know Thee, bless Thy reign!”

REV. I. 12—20.

THE VISION OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLE-
 STICKS AND THE SON OF MAN IN THE MIDST.—
 COMMAND TO WRITE. — THE MYSTERY EX-
 PLAINED.

12 And I turned to see the voice that
 spake with me. And being turned, I
 saw seven golden candlesticks; 13.—
 And in the midst of the seven candle-
 sticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed
 with a garment down to the foot, and

girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14.—His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15.—And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16.—And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. 17.—And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18.—*I am* he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19.—Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20.—The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

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things to be written, and who is the First and the Last, the Originator and Finisher of our salvation, the eternally living, mighty and loving Redeemer and Deliverer of His people from sin and all their enemies. It may truly be affirmed of this, as of all other Scripture, "The prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* Let us treasure the precious truths which follow, and lay them up in our hearts, and meditate upon them, as we may do to our great comfort and edification, day and night.

Let us heartily believe in the Second Advent of Christ in person, and with the great power and glory which are given Him by the will of the Father, by right of redemption as well as creation. And, oh! when it is proclaimed, "Behold, He cometh," and when the effulgence of His illustrious presence shall be apparent to all the world, may we be prepared to meet Him then with joy, and not with grief! Let us see that we be not found among the kindreds and tribes of the earth impenitent, unbelieving, and opposed to His kingdom; but among those, who, having mourned over our sins *now*, with humble and lively faith, shall then be exalted to His right hand among "the royal priesthood," who shall reign for ever with Him.

* 2 Peter i. 21.

“How transcendent are Thy glories,

✓ Fairer than the sons of men!

While Thy blessed Mediation

Brings us back to God again!

Blest Redeemer,

How we triumph in Thy reign!

Gird thy sword on, mighty Hero,

Make Thy Word of Truth Thy care;

Prosper in Thy course majestic,

All success attend Thy war!

Gracious Victor,

Let mankind, before Thee, fear!

Blest are all that touch Thy sceptre,

Blest are all that own Thy reign!

Freed from Sin, that worst of tyrants,

Rescued from its galling chain!

Saints and angels,

All who know Thee, bless Thy reign!”

REV. I. 12—20.

THE VISION OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS AND THE SON OF MAN IN THE MIDST.—
COMMAND TO WRITE.—THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13.—And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and

girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14.—His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15.—And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16.—And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. 17.—And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18.—*I am* he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19.—Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20.—The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

12.—John was attracted by the unusual sound, and immediately turned to see the person who uttered it. The first object which struck his attention was the appearance of seven golden candlesticks,* and, next,

13.—In the midst of them was One, in the human form and likeness of the "Son of Man," but arrayed in a long flowing garment reaching to the foot, and having a golden girdle resembling that used by the Jewish priesthood, extending from the neck and crossed over on the breast.†

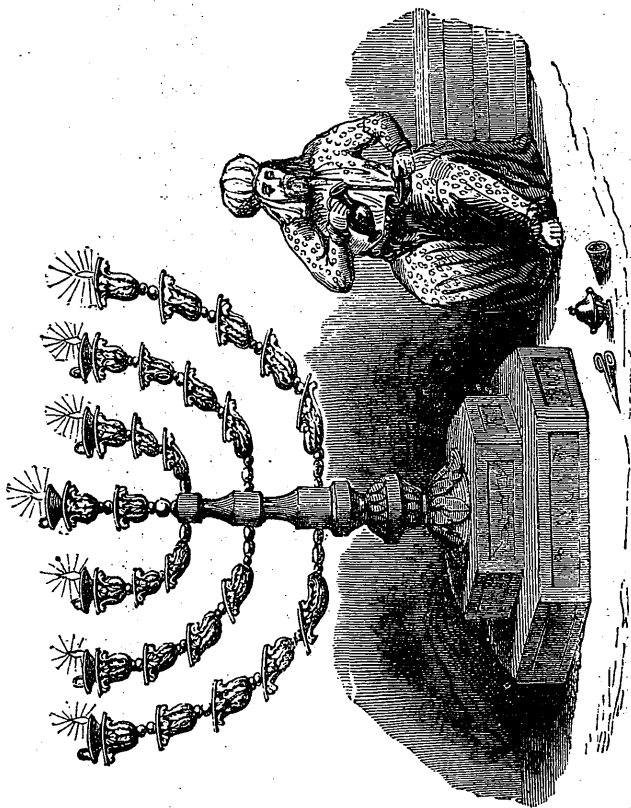
14.—The hair of His head was "white," like the undyed wool, or drifting snow; and his "eyes" were piercing and flashing as "a flame of fire."

15.—"His feet" were bright as the fine burnished brass of the glowing furnace, and "His voice" loud as the sound of the billowy waters of the deep when they dash against the rock-bound shores:

16.—He held "in His right hand," as if with ruling and protecting power, seven beautiful "stars;" and from his mouth seemed to issue a

* See view of the Ancient Golden Candlestick of the Temple. Exod. xxv. 37; Zech. iv. 2, 3. The *Golden Candlestick, with seven branches*, symbolizes a *true Church* having the sevenfold gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

† See Exod. xxxix. 5; also Dan. vii. 9. Allusions will be found throughout the Apocalypse to the Jewish priesthood, temple, and customs. The priests' girdles were a kind of sash, crossed on the breast and falling down to the feet.



“sharp sword with two edges;”* and His countenance was beaming with lustre of unclouded brightness, as when the sun at midday shoots forth his luminous rays.†

This marvellous appearance of Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks may remind us of one or two things worthy of remembrance. (1) Christ is ever in the midst of His Church, according to His promise made when He was about to withdraw for a season, personally, from the scene of its conflicts; “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”‡ (2) He bears the *Priestly Office* toward His Church, now that He has ascended within the veil, presiding on the Mercy Seat, presenting His perfected sacrifice for sinners, interceding for the supply of all their need, according to the riches of the Divine glory, and “obtaining gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”|| (3) His *Appearance*, as well as vesture, is highly characteristic of attributes only applicable to Deity, and attesting the real personality and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His snow-white “head” as “the ancient of days,”§ His flaming “eyes,” mark the universality of Omniscience¶

* See Rev. xix. 15.

† See the account of Christ's appearance at the Transfiguration. Matt. xvii. 2, &c. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 20.

|| Ps. lxxviii. 18; Ephes. iv. 8, 9. § Mich. v. 2; Dan. vii. 9

¶ Rev. ii. 18; Prov. xv. 3; Dan. x. 6.

and lightning-glance of His all-searching Spirit,* His burnished "*feet*," show the melting and overwhelming power of His presence and holiness.† His "voice," sent forth as Jehovah, and "*that a mighty voice*," shaking all nature‡—the "*sharp two-edged sword*" from His mouth, the penetration of His infallible Truth to the inmost recesses of the soul, and subdual thereby of His enemies and convincing of His friends||—his "*countenance*" like the meridian sun, the manifestation of His glory as the "Light of the world," as seen also in the Mount of Transfiguration, and as shall be seen hereafter in the "holy Jerusalem."§ (4) The action of *holding the seven stars in His right hand*, may instruct us, in a general point of view how, as One with the Father, He is "the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;"¶ that He maintains, with Him, the absolute rule over

"The sweet influences of Pleiades,**
And the bands of Orion"—

calling the stars by their names, and governing the luminaries of the universe; but, more specially, and, with reference to what follows, that

* Ps. cxxxix. 7, and 1 Cor. ii. 10. † Ps. xcvi. 5; Judges v. 5.

‡ Ps. lxxviii. 33; Ezek. xliii. 2.

|| Is. xlix. 2; Heb. iv. 12; Rev. xix. 15.

§ John i. 4; Rev. x. 1; xxi. 11, 23.

¶ James i. 17. ** Job xxxviii. 31.

He holds the reins of just government over His Church and Ministering Servants on this earth; that He possesses the power and exercises His equitable authority over them, for their good, as easily as though He held them “in the hollow of His hand”—the “*right hand*” of His justice and majesty.*

17.—The whole vision deeply impressed the mind of the apostle with awe and reverence, wonder and amazement. He was overpowered by the sudden effect of the sight. Consciousness failed him; he fainted, and fell at the Lord’s feet as one dead.† The assurance, however, was immediately given him, to raise him from the dust, and dispel his alarm, that it was Jesus Himself who appeared to him. He speaks to him, most gently, no doubt, as He ever does by His providence to His alarmed disciples in the tempest, “It is I; be not afraid!”‡ The storm is hushed; and there is a great calm: *He* seems to say,

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee!

Be not dismayed; for I am thy God!

I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee,

Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”||

* Ps. cxviii. 15.

† See similar effect on holy men and prophets upon receiving visions of God, Exod. xxxiii. 20; Is. vi. 5; Ezek. i. 28—33; Dan. viii. 18; x. 7, 9—17. ‡ Matt. xiv. 27.

|| Isai. xli. 10.

18.—There can be no doubt of the eternal Existence of Christ, and that He is ever “*mighty to save.*” He has here the attribute which He delights to claim as His own, of Eternity; and He wishes every one of His tried and believing servants to recognise the unchangeableness of His love in dying for them, as the ground of their security in Him for ever. Who could say this, but Jesus our Lord, “I am He that liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore?” We are convinced it is He, and none other! Jesus was seen by John to suffer and expire on the Cross. He was known to have risen from the dead, on the third day. He was seen by the same John ascending into the heavens, living, and glorified. And so He ever lives. “For in Him is life.” The very dead live in Him, who is “the resurrection and the life,” for evermore. “Amen.” This is a *verity*, worthy of the solemn affirmation of Him who cannot lie; and worthy of being emphatically imprinted upon the mind of believers. The same Jesus who was crucified in weakness, as “the man,” now liveth “evermore” in power, as the eternal God. O, suffering Christian! be convinced—

“The eternal God is thy refuge!

And underneath are the everlasting arms!”*

* Deut. xxxiii. 27.

The same Jesus, also, has “the keys*”—all power being His in heaven and in earth; yes, over the powers of Darkness, Death, and Hell! He shuts, and no man can open; He opens, and no one can shut. And yet, “He doeth all things well.” “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” It is He who “opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers.” It is He who shuts it against deceivers and unbelievers, against the contentious and disobedient.†

19.—John is now commanded by the manifest Word of Christ Himself, to write the things which were now seen by him, as well as those which should be declared to him in succession, then existing in the condition of the Churches (“*the things which are*”), and things which were farther distant in the future (“*the things which shall be hereafter*”).

He would be most willing to do this, after the reassuring and unmistakable manifestation of His Saviour’s presence and power. He who “knew all things” is now again his Teacher. He could not

* “*The keys*”—emblems of power, office, and authority; see Isai. xxii. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 20; Rev. xx. 12.

† Luke xi. 52; John ix. 39, xii. 37—40; Rom. ii. 6—11. The Jewish lawyers were charged by Christ with taking away “the key of knowledge and deceiving the people.” The power of “the keys” is absolute in the Lord’s hands; but we may be assured that it is regulated by the strictest justice, truth equity, and righteousness.

be deceived: he was sure to be directed into all truth by the Spirit: he would gladly obey, and undertake the task under his Lord's guidance, with the presence of the Comforter, and in dependence on Divine grace.

20.—The explanation is, at once, given to him by his Lord, of the meaning of the symbols which he had observed, in the vision which had just passed before his eyes: "*The seven stars*" signify the angels of the seven Churches: and "*the seven candlesticks,*" the seven Churches.

The "mystery" here stated, and so early explained respecting the first class of symbolical representations, seems to characterise the whole system on which the Apocalypse is based. It is mainly a symbolical book. The mystery, or hidden meaning of the signs, figures, and allegories, can only be cleared up by dependence on the same great Teacher who instructed John to write. It is not by human wisdom and learning merely that the thread of intricate truth can be unravelled. "The world by (this) wisdom knows not God." It is deep truth, but not too deep for the "taught of God." These "deep things of God" are designed for the mature judgment, for the more advanced disciple, and for the willing and humble student in the School of Christ. They afford some of the "strong meat" which is suited to those "who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

* Heb. v. 14.

May God grant to each one who reads and studies "*The Mystery*"* of the Apocalypse, this spirit of discernment! We may be assured that the light which clears up to a great extent "*The Mystery*" of many portions of God's Word, will be imparted to those who will humbly ask for it, and sit, like children, at the feet of Jesus, that they may learn it. The "deep things of God," and things which accompany salvation, are oft-times "hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes." "Even so, Father!" exclaimed Jesus, "for so it seemeth good in thy sight." And we have the inspired word of an apostle in confirmation of the fact: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."†

It is not for us to doubt, because there are difficulties in the way. Nor does it become us to cavil and dispute, like "the mockers" of the last days, because there are mysteries in God's Word. A revelation from God implies mystery. But the exercise of thought, of prayer, and of pains, while

* The word "*Mystery*" means that about which there is some depth, obscurity, and difficulty, till disclosed and made known; 1 Tim. iii. 16. † 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

it profits the mind in "rightly dividing the Word of Truth," in the searching and comparing* of holy Scripture, will also help to draw down light from above, and clear up the darkness. The "mountain" is cast into the depths of the sea, or becomes an easily passable and surmountable plain, before the power of faith and the hand of the Great Zerubbabel "who promises to lead us."†

"Every heavenly Truth we garner
In our hearts is golden ore,
That, as swiftly time advanceth,
Shineth ever more and more.

And will shine until the glory
Riseth to the perfect day!
When the shadows of the earth-land
Shall for ever pass away!"

REV. II. 1-7.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS.—
COMMENDATION.—ADMONITION.—PROMISE TO
THE OVERCOMER.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right

* 1 Cor. ii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 15, and John v. 39, &c. "The searching of the Scriptures," enjoined by our Lord, and "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," recommended by the Apostle Paul, seem to be the personal duty of every one who would arrive at the truth.

† Matt. xvii. 20; Zech. iv. 7. "The Bible," says Bishop

hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2.—I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3.—And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4.—Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5.—Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6.—But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Wordsworth, "addresses itself to the whole man. It exercises his memory, strengthens his reason, controls his passions, informs his judgment, regulates his conscience, sanctifies his will, enlivens his fancy, warms his imagination, cherishes his affections, stimulates his practice, quickens his hopes, and animates his faith."

1.—The command to John comes from the Lord Supreme, who addressed him before,* as He who “holdeth the seven stars in His right hand,” and who walketh “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,” to write, first, to “the angel† of the Church of Ephesus.”

Ephesus is probably put first, as being the chief city of Asia Minor, at that time, being called by the Romans, to whom it was subject, “The first and greatest metropolis of Asia;” or it may be brought into some prominence from the fact of its being, as generally believed, John’s own Church, of which he had been the apostolic overseer, including also the other six, as a kind of apostolic diocese.‡ This may be the reason why the whole “seven” Churches of Asia Minor, and none other, are selected for these special epistles by the head of the Universal Church, since many other Christian and flourishing Churches, we know, existed in

* See i. 16, 20.

† Angel, “Messenger of God.”—Bishop,—one presiding over the service and ordering the affairs of the Church of Ephesus; see Mal. ii. 7. A “ruler of the synagogue,” or chief officer, it is said, had this name. Timothy was chief pastor and bishop, probably about this time.

‡ See Euseb. lib. III., c. 1. The apostles themselves do not appear to have settled down as bishops in any particular city; but, generally, to have travelled from place to place, preaching the Gospel. Tradition and history assign John’s residence chiefly at Ephesus, whither, also, he returned after his exile, and where he died in extreme old age. It is known that Timothy was bishop there about A.D. 60; see 1 Tim. i. 1—3.

various parts of the Roman empire at this period, besides these seven.*

Paul preached at Ephesus and laboured among Jews and Greeks there for nearly three years.† He first, with Aquila and Priscilla, after Apollos had been imperfectly teaching, “knowing only the baptism of John,”‡ brought the full doctrine of the Gospel to the Ephesians,§ and wrought many miracles among them, so that “the word of God mightily grew and prevailed.”

Ephesus was the great centre, also, of pagan idolatrous worship. Its vast Temple of Diana was one of the wonders of the world. “Great,” said they, “is Diana of the Ephesians;”|| and fierce was the opposition among the image-makers and idol-lovers when their craft was endangered, and their “magnificent” goddess was in jeopardy of being “destroyed” by the power of the pure Gospel which Paul and others preached.

This Church continued to flourish in spite of the malice of the enemy of souls. Inquirers and converts are generally increased, and more added

* See, for instance, Paul’s labours as mentioned in the Acts and his Epistles to Churches at Rome, Corinth, in Galatia, Colossæ, and Thessalonica.

† Acts xviii. 19, xix. 1, &c. ‡ Acts xviii. 25.

§ They had not known, it seems, from Acts xix. 1—3, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost’s changing, regenerating, and sanctifying grace. Till this is known, felt, and depended upon, no sound Christian work can be established in the soul of man. || Acts xix. 28.

to the Lord, in the days of fiercest persecution stirred up by the great adversary. He can do nothing, we know, against the truth, but it shall be overruled and turn out in the end, "for the truth."* This is found verified continually throughout the eventful history of the Christian Church.

2.—The state and circumstances of the Church, their works and labours of love and patience under trials, were accurately known to Him who "holds the stars"† and "walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks."‡ His pastors and ministering servants in the Churches are objects of His especial regard and care; and all that concerns the welfare of the flock, and the most minute particulars of their condition, are intimately known to and observed by Him.

None of the trials of the Ephesian Church and its bishop or chief presbyter had escaped His notice. He was well acquainted with the persecutions which they, like John himself, at that time were undergoing from the Roman power, and

* 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

† "*Stars*" are explained before (i. 20) as the Angels or Bishops of the Churches. The word may be taken in prophetic language as denoting kings, princes, and persons in places of earthly and political, or moral and spiritual eminence.

‡ "*Candlesticks*," (p. 18, 19) lamp-stands, light-bearers, symbolize the Church of God, set as *a city upon a hill*, extending its pure light of Truth and Grace, for all to see, and by its shining to attract many. Matt. v. 14. Exod. xxv. 31, 32.

what need they had of Divine grace to support them under their heavy troubles. He knew, also, how they had been tried, in another way, by false teachers, advocates of error, persons denying the Pre-existence and Eternity of Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ,* introducing strange and corrupt doctrines,† claiming a right and authority equal to “apostles.”

These troubles they had borne with “patience,” and they are so far commended; also, for their careful examination into the pretensions of those strange teachers, and, after proving them to be false, for rejecting with disdain their “philosophy and vain deceit,” and firmly holding to the apostolic doctrine and fellowship.

3.—They are further commended for labouring on, in the name of the Lord, and bearing up manfully by “patient continuance in well doing;” not “fainting,” nor falling away wearied in days of adversity and rebuke, but “enduring as seeing Him who was invisible,” knowing that the correction came from their heavenly Father’s hand.‡

4, 5.—They were not altogether perfect, and free from blame. What Church or individual member upon earth can lay claim to such exemp-

* *Ebionites and Cerinthians*, Gnostics and others, denying the incarnation and resurrection of the dead.

† *Nicolaitanes*. See ver. 6.

‡ See Gal. vi. 9. and Heb. xii. 3,

tion? The Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls sees many things in all and each one, which cannot be commended. He notices and detects many blemishes which escape even ourselves. If He expose them by reproofs, in His Word or through some chiding of His Providence, let us take the timely hint and tender admonition, and praise Him for it.

They had declined from the ardour of their "first love." The fervency of zeal which they had displayed in their early espousals to Christ, as a Church, had subsided and grown comparatively cold.* They had allowed "the cares of the world and the lust of other things" to creep in, and mingle with the "good seed," so as to mar its productiveness and hinder its progress to maturity and perfection. The goodness of many appeared to the Supreme Overseer, like that of Ephraim and Judah, "only as the morning cloud, and the early dew that passeth away."† The tendency of religious character is to relapse and become remiss. It will soon fall from its ardour into a state of formality and sluggishness of heart, unless the flame once kindled is well kept up in the soul by seeking the counteracting and controlling influences

* See illustrations of their "first love" in Acts xix. and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, *passim*. Then compare Jer. ii. 2, and the *Epistles to Timothy* throughout which are intimations of decline and heresies in the Church; see 2 Tim. i. 15, 2 18. † Hosea vi. 4.

of heavenly Grace, and the Holy Spirit's "fire of love."*

The Great Ruler of the Churches calls upon them, after this remonstrance, to remember and do "their first works," and return unto Him with all their heart, and He certainly would return to them with marks of His forgiveness and favour. Otherwise, if they continued unmoved, and still impenitent, He would quickly visit their offences, and take their "Candlestick out of its place," extinguishing the light of their Church.†

6.—He who is light and truth, purity and perfection, cannot but loathe and detest anything in His Church which is opposed to His own beautiful character of spotless Holiness. The evil works and doings of the "Nicolaitanes," in Ephesus, were so notorious as to be abominated by all good men, from "the Angel" downwards to all classes of Christians. Nothing impure in doctrine, or unclean in manner of life, can have

* It has been noticed in many Christian bodies, how common is the falling off, after a time, from the first fervency of zeal in the Lord's cause; *e. g.*—the early Christians (Acts ii. 42—47)—so, later, the Nestorians, the Churches of Protestant Germany, the Puritans, Methodists, &c.

† Such must be the meaning of "removing the candlestick out of its place." The desolation of Ephesus, according to this prophecy, was completed under the invasions of the Turks: "In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first Angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelations: the desolation is complete, and the Temple of Diana, or the 'Church of Mercy' will equally clude the search of the curious traveller." (Gibbon, Decl. iv. 260.)

place for a moment in the principles of the Gospel of Christ. "This ye know" that "no unclean person" . . . hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."* "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man: For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousnesses, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."†

"A highway shall be there, and a Way,
And it shall be called, The Way of Holiness;
The unclean shall not pass over it;
The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."‡

7.—This first epistle closes, like each of the others,§ with an exhortation, and a promise. The

* See Eph. v. 5; also Rev. xxi. 27.

† Mark vii. 20—23. Our translation of these words is in the singular number, the original Greek is *plural*.

‡ Isa. xxxv. 8. We learn from the above quotations that the "uncleanness" which excludes from "the kingdom" is a *moral*, and not a mere *ceremonial* pollution; it is of the heart, faith, and conduct, more than of the understanding and condition in human society. The *Nicolaitanes* may have derived their name from Nicolas, the deacon of Antioch (Acts vi. 5), as a name of honour from him, rather than through his teaching their unsound doctrines (v. 15). They were a species of profligate *Antinomians*, professing faith without practice, sanctioning adultery and illicit pleasures, gross indulgences, and eating "things offered to idols" (Euseb. iii. 29).

§ See ver. 11, 17, 29, also iii. 6, 13, 22.

exhortation here is very similar to words which were frequently uttered by our blessed Lord, when He would arrest attention, and impress rare and important truths upon the minds of His hearers.* The “hearing ear,” we know, as well as the “seeing eye” in all spiritual matters, is from the Lord. The Lord, “the Holy Spirit,” alone is able to “open the heart” and to lead the understanding into all necessary and saving truth. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”† The Saviour of souls, therefore, urges upon all who would listen to His word, or read it with profit, to seek the Holy Spirit’s teaching for this purpose :

“The Spirit breathes upon the Word,
And brings the truth to sight ;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light !”

The Spirit speaks through Christ,‡ and gives His word a living power to the soul, preparing the heart to receive and value it, and the mind to understand and treasure it up for use. Hence, while He speaks to us Himself, he bids us hear “what the Spirit saith.” Of His words to us in this inspired Book, as when He was speaking to men upon earth, it may be said, “They are spirit, and they

* Matt. xi. 15 ; Mark iv. 23, vii. 16.

† 1 Cor ii. 11, 14. ‡ John iii. 34.

are life.”* And what He says by the Spirit to one or seven Churches, in the age of John’s writing the Apocalypse, He says to all Churches and to all classes and ages. The sacred and “sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed,” is “not of any private interpretation,” or exclusive meaning and confined application. But it is “a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn.”† It is a beacon-light and watch-word for all times and circumstances of the Universal Church unto the end. Many Churches, and, in distant ages, read here by the Spirit’s light and teaching things which belong and are suited to them, as well as to Ephesus and other Churches at this time existing.‡

The *promise*, following this exhortation, is, that he who takes heed, and overcomes; who gains the mastery over his own besetting sins and any prevailing errors in the Church; over the temptations to grow cold and remiss in the love of Christ (v. 4.), and over the allurements of the evil world and the unruly and corrupt flesh; shall have, as the reward of his victory of faith, the right and privilege of an immortality of happiness; as symbo-

* John vi. 63. † 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

‡ It has been supposed, not without reason, that the seven epistles to the Churches are designed by Divine wisdom to be types of Churches and societies of Christians in various ages; that each may see a counterpart and phase of resemblance, if they mark well the Spirit’s meaning.

lized here by partaking of the fruit of "The tree of life,* in the midst of the paradise of God."†

Oh, what a rich blessing, beyond conception, is here promised to the victor! A restoration to a loftier and better "Paradise of God" and "Tree of Life," than that lost by the fall! because a paradise *perpetuated* in immortal bliss, unconditionally ours for ever, because insured to us by "the blood of the everlasting covenant!" It is worth all the pains of the striving‡ to enter, all the toil of the conflict with sin, all the labour of the warfare and fight of faith, all the works of charity, all the purifying process in the furnace of trial, all the patience of saints!

May we stand the test of the contest, and bear the brunt of the battle, and be approved at last, as good soldiers of the Cross, by Him who "holdeth the stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the Churches!"

"In all our daily joys and griefs,
In daily work and rest,
To those who seek Him, Christ is near,
Our bliss to calm, to soothe our care,
In leaning on His breast!

* See mention of the "tree of life," Ger. ii. 9; iii. 22; Rev. xxii. 2, 14.

† The word "Paradise" only occurs here and at Luke xxiii. 43, and 2 Cor. xii. 4. It signifies a richly-cultivated garden, or pleasure-park. Here it represents the Eden of God's planting, the pleasures of *Heaven*.

‡ Luke xiii. 24: "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate." The word is very strong in the original; "*αγωνιζεσθε*," strive as in the agony of a life and death-struggle; see also 2 Tim. ii. 5 1 Cor. ix. 24-27.

Open our eyes, O Lord, we pray,
To see our way—our Guide!
So by the path that here we tread,
We, following on, may still be led
In Thy light to abide.”

REV. II. 8—11.

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA ADDRESSED.—TRIBULATION FORETOLD, TEN DAYS.—PROMISE.

8.—And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9.—I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan. 10.—Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: because the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

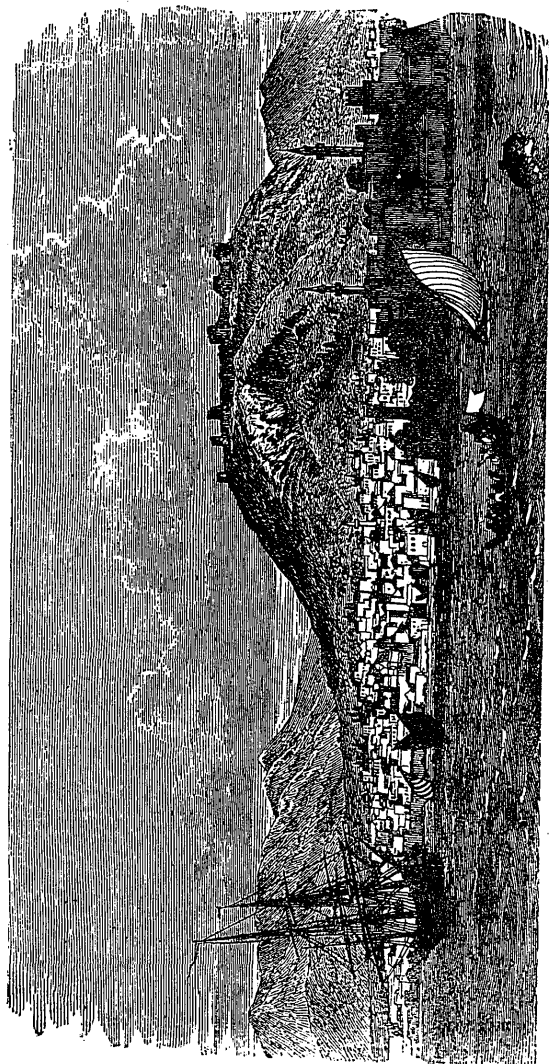
8.—The “*Church in Smyrna*,” is next addressed. Smyrna* now exists as a flourishing city—almost the only one left on the sites of the Seven Churches. It is the chief city of Anatolia (Asia Minor), forty miles to the north of Ephesus, and on the western coast.

The attribute taken and put prominently before this Church, by the Lord who addresses them, is that mentioned before (i. 11, 18), of his “*Eternity*,” His being “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,” the ever-living Saviour, who “died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.”†

9.—With this attribute of Deity He claims to have, of right and truth, as in the case of the Ephesians, a perfect knowledge of all their state, their works of charity, as evidences of their faith‡ and purity, their “tribulation” in days of great suffering and affliction from the world, and for the cause of Christ,§ and their “poverty” on account of the spoiling of their goods by persecutors and the many indigent and needy Christians of the lower orders who belonged to their communion. Though

* See view of the present city. The word signifies “myrrh.” The present town, called by the Turks Esmir, is built on the site of the ancient city, and is thickly inhabited. The population is about 150,000, one-third of whom are Christians—Greeks, Franks, and Armenians. It is now an important emporium of commerce for the East, and also a central post for missionary operations. † Rom. xiv. 9. ‡ James ii. 17—22.

§ The persecution under Domitian raged at this time.



they were for the most part "poor in this world," yet He knew that, in another and higher sense, they were "rich;" having that faith in Him which is the only "true riches."* This treasure within the heart of the Christian, however poor he may be among men, enriches him with God for all eternity. He has that inward gift which gold cannot equal, nor all the riches of this world purchase.† It is an imperishable gain, unknown to the men of the world, and with which a stranger cannot intermeddle.‡ It raises the beggar from the dunghill, to "set him among princes, and make him inherit the throne of glory."§

There were some in the city who troubled them, Jews in name, but not of the true Israel;|| rather of the family and "*synagogue of Satan*;" unbelievers and opposers; following in conduct the "father of lies," and the great adversary of Christ and His people; worshippers of the "mammon of unrighteousness."

10.—They need not be afraid, while Jesus is on their side. If their faith in Him remain firm, they may defy a host of enemies. Greater is He who is for them, than all that can be against them.

* Luke xvi. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 10; James ii. 5.

† Ps. xix. 10; Prov. iii. 14, 15; Isa. lv. 1.

‡ Prov. xiv. 10. § 1 Sam. ii. 8.

|| There were many Jews in Smyrna. Wherever there is a great emporium of trade, there are always to be found Jews of the mercenary, base, money-loving class; caring little for religion, and opposing Christianity with all their might; see Acts xiii. 45, 50.

The accuser* may cast them into prison, and severely try their courage and constancy of faith. Their Church, in the general persecution by the Roman adversary, may have "ten days" (prophetically, ten years†) of fiery "tribulation." Still, they must not be cast down, since affliction is the portion more or less, of God's best people: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer," says Christ, "I have overcome the world:" "In me ye shall have peace."‡

Only let the believer, under his affliction, beware of fear, and never give up or relax his *trust in God*. The promise from Christ's own lips to cheer him on, and support him under the severest trial, and keep him "*faithful unto death*," is "*I will give thee the crown of life*." It is He declares this, who "ever liveth to make intercession for his people," having life and salvation in Himself, and the gift of "the crown of life," to as many as believe and are found "*faithful unto death*."§

11.—All Churches are exhorted to hear, as before, and attend to what is said|| on the state of this Church, and what Christ, by the Holy

* The word "devil," διαβολος, means accuser.

† The persecution under Domitian lasted ten years, beginning A.D. 95. ‡ John xvi. 33.

|| See remarks on ver. 7.

§ See ver. 8. The attribute chosen here by Christ seems specially suitable to encourage those whose persons and property were in constant danger from the enemy; many of whom, like the venerable *Polycarp* and his successors in the bishopric,

Spirit, saith unto each for their instruction and edification. All may see and be convinced that the most active and earnest of His Churches and people are liable to be tried from within and without, from poverty and distress in the world, and from the assaults of bitter enemies and blaspheming persecutors, cruel and hostile traducers, deceitful and rancorous calumniators, as if set on by Satan himself. But sufferings, undergone according to the will of God, and borne in the strength of Christ, will only turn to the confusion of the foe

had to lay down their lives in the cause of the Gospel. The history of *Polycarp*, a disciple of St. John, as far as it has come down to us (Euseb. lib. iv. 15), is worthy of notice. He was Bishop of Ephesus when this Apocalypse was written, and continued there till the reign of M. Aurelius, A.D. 167. He was then in his 120th year. His great age and venerable character were thought likely to shield him from the rage of the persecutors. But he was seized and carried to the market-place at Smyrna for execution, to be devoured by wild beasts. He was entreated by the officers, who affected to wish his life to be spared, to renounce Christ and worship their gods. But his noble and faithful reply has been handed down and deserves to be recorded here: "Eighty and six years," said the martyr, "have I served Him, and He has never wronged or injured me. How, then, can I blaspheme my King, who has saved me?" The wild beasts not being prepared, he was thrown into the flames, which seemed loth to consume him, forming an arch over his head; at last he was stabbed with a sword, and his body fell down into the fire. The Jews were present in large numbers, and helped on the holocaust by their activity, endeavouring even to prevent the Christians from bearing away the ashes of the martyr. An interesting letter of the Smyranean Church is extant, giving a detailed account of his martyrdom.

and the advancement of the faith, and the obtaining of a brighter crown by those who are tried to the uttermost, and maintain the beginning of their confidence stedfast to the end.

All may be assured that the victory is certain, and the prize sure to those "who overcome." According to the nature of the intensity of the affliction, so shall be the leading feature of the promised happiness. The "crown of life" shall be studded bright with gems of unfading lustre and undying beauty. These shall never be tarnished, nor suffer decay. They cannot be subject to any diminution of splendour. The earthly crucible has refined the gold seven times in the fire. It is indestructible; freed from all dross and taint of any more corruption. The weight of glory is "eternal," and "far more exceeding" and abundant in blessing, bearing no proportion to the affliction which has been experienced in this transitory state.*

All who inherit the "crown" are exempt for ever from the fear of "the second death."† They can sin no more; they can suffer no more; they can die no more. They are not susceptible of any pain, nor amenable to any punishment. The inhabitant (of that kingdom) shall never say, "I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."‡ All such things per-

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. † See Rev. xx. 6—14, and xxi. 8.

‡ Isa. xxxiii. 24.

taining to the present chequered scene of sin and mortality shall have passed away for ever.

O let us labour to enter into this rest, and not count the cost of the preparatory trial. All our pains and strivings, our diligence in good works, and patience in tribulation will be abundantly rewarded in the blissful portion which awaits the faithful combatant and the successful warrior. The Eternal One, "The First and the Last," is ever beckoning us upward, and urging us onward by the smile of his love, and the light of his countenance lifted up upon his people. He who died for us, and lives for ever for us, to raise us to His throne and kingdom, will not withhold any good and necessary help and strength to His poor and tried pilgrims in the midst of the wilderness. Nourishing bread shall be given them for the way; the supply of refreshing waters shall be sure. Let us not fail to trust Him, in the dark day as well as in the bright. He will "make all things work together for good to them that love Him."

He looks for constancy, stedfastness, and faithfulness in us "unto death." The Church of the Living God need not fear the blasphemy of the whole "synagogue of Satan" against her, if she is true to her Lord. The crown of life is hers, and for every one of her tried and chosen members. The enemy may hurt the perishable, dying body; he cannot touch the jewel of the immortal and ransomed soul. That is eternally safe, from sin

and death ; it cannot be destroyed, nor perish, nor suffer again. “ Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

“ I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless,
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness !
 Where is Death’s sting ? where, Grave, thy victory ?
 I triumph still, if Thou abide with me !”

REV. II. 12—17.

THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS.—SATAN’S SEAT.—
 ANTIPAS.—DOCTRINE OF BALAAM.—THE PRO-
 MISE.

12.—And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write ; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges ; 13.—I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan’s seat *is* : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14.—But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock

* 1 Cor. xv. 57.

before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15.—So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16.—Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

12.—*Pergamos* was north of Smyrna, and the capital of Mysia, the ancient kingdom of Eumenes. The distinctive title of the Lord, who addresses this Church, is "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." A sharp and pointed rebuke, we observe, proceeds from the mouth of Him who knew and marked their works.

This Christian Church was located as if in the very seat and shrine of Satan; amid a bigoted, idolatrous people, who made Jupiter and Diana, Æsculapius and Venus, the great objects of their adoration.* It was difficult for the few Christians

* Idolatrous worship was very prevalent at Pergamos. The Temple of Æsculapius, the god of Healing, was particularly

resident amid the pollutions of idolatry and the persecutions of the enemies of the Gospel, to escape altogether without being contaminated by the evil influences around them. In this danger the greater part are commended for holding fast to the faith of Christ, and not denying His holy name and cause, though at the peril of their lives.

One distinguished individual is mentioned as having borne faithful testimony unto death, on some occasion of persecution or popular excitement. Antipas* is honoured by name in the Book of God and inspired record, as Christ's "faithful martyr." He counted not his life dear to him, so long as he could "finish his course with joy," in the blessed assurance of the "better resurrection" and the reign with Christ in glory.† Dangerous it must ever be to the faith and morals, especially

famous. Pergamos is also noted for its extensive library, consisting of 200,000 volumes in the reign of Eumenes II. This was removed by Marc Antony to Egypt and given to Queen Cleopatra. From this city the name *parchment* has had its origin. The use of the skins of sheep and goats for manuscripts (before the papyrus was exported from Egypt) caused these skins to be known as *Pergamene*, hence our word. The place now contains about 14,000 inhabitants.

* Nothing is mentioned beyond this of Antipas in ecclesiastical history. A bishop named Papias, of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, suffered martyrdom at Pergamos, A.D. 163.

† Heb. xi. 35; Acts xx. 24; Rev. vi. 9, xx. 4. Nothing certain is known of this martyr, but there can be no doubt that the name is a real and not a figurative one, as some have been inclined to think.

of young and weak Christians, when placed as the people of the Church at Pergamos were, in the midst of evil associations, and dwelling beside those whose “communications” were “earthly, sensual, devilish.”*

14, 15.—While they had temptations from without, and seemed to maintain their constancy in Christ and stedfastness of faith firmly against them; they were not so successful against enemies and corruptions of the truth and holiness of the Gospel, in the bosom of the Church. The worst of all enemies are traitors in the camp. Against an open and declared foe we can be better on our guard; but, against enemies of “our own household,” and within the fold, like wolves in sheep’s clothing, we know not well how to watch or defend ourselves.† On the one hand were false prophets and teachers, like Balaam of old;‡ and, on the other, corrupt and licentious schismatics, like the Nicolaitanes;§ each introducing and inculcating idolatrous and licentious practices, and propagating doctrines contrary to sound Gospel truth, adverse

* 1 Cor. xv. 33; James iii. 15.

† Matt. x. 36: “A man’s foes shall be those of his own household,” meaning his worst and most deadly enemies, when set on by Satan.

‡ The sin of *Balaam*, and his wicked attempt to seduce the children of Israel to idolatry by illicit alliances with the Moabites, is noticed Numb. xxxi. 16; Ezek. xlv. 7; 2 Pet ii. 15, 16; Jude 11.

§ See *Nicolaitanes* before, ver. 6.

to spiritual worship, and destructive of purity of morals; each hateful to the Lord, and “an offence” to Him, directly opposed to the eternally pure principles of truth and holiness.

Every thing which tends to take off the mind from the simplicity and spirituality of the Gospel, which fosters meretricious forms of worship, half-Christian, half-heathen; and all multiplication of external objects in ornamentation of Churches, distracting the attention from heart-communion with God, who is a Spirit, and producing a sensuous attraction from outward display; must be classed with the doctrine of Balaam, as placing a grievous “stumbling-block” in the way of the true Israel of God.

So, every thing which is contrary to correct moral habits in the young and others; opposed to purity in thought, word, sight, or deed;* is to be denounced and detested, as that which the holy Saviour especially hates; as a mixing up of impure rights and doings of paganism with the holiness of heart and life expected of the true child of God and follower of Jesus.

16.—The presiding officers and presbyters of the Church were, in a measure, responsible for the

* Nothing can much more stamp our Saviour's determined requirement of moral holiness and hatred of impurity in all who profess His Gospel, than the passages in which we are taught that the very looks, words, and thoughts, are all to be guarded against temptation; Matt. v. 28, 37. See Prov. xxiv. 9; Job xxxi. 1; Ps. xix. 14; Ephes. iv. 29.

continuance of these dangerous evils, like gangrenes, within the body. Therefore, the whole Church is called upon to "repent," turn from this sin, and testify for Christ; by doing every thing in their power to remove the offenders from their midst, and clear themselves entirely from any seeming countenance of their errors or apparent participation in their crimes. If the propagators of error and unsound and dangerous practices in a Church cannot be excommunicated in the present day, as they deserve,* or made amenable to law, as they require; let them be authoritatively denounced, properly discountenanced, and publicly reprehended, as a positive duty owed to God, and a witness for Christ and His Gospel.

Unless we thus shake off the dust of our feet, as a testimony against them, we entail a just rebuke from the "Great Shepherd" above, and a needful summons from Him to repentance; lest by our silence and indifference we seem to associate ourselves with the sin, and allow the canker-ing evil to grow, and cause the blood of ruined and slain souls to be "required at our hands."†

He it is who summons the offender to repentance,

* Matt. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 1—7; xiii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 20.

† See Ezek. iii. 18, 20; xxxiii. 18; John viii. 24; 1 Tim. v. 22: "Be not partakers of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." This was addressed to a bishop of the Church. See also Prov. xxix. 24; Rev. xviii. 4.

who is represented significantly, in the preparatory vision of the Divine Majesty in the midst of the Churches and the opening of the epistle to Pergamos, as having the "sharp two-edged sword coming out of his mouth" (i. 16, ii. 12); and who is spoken of by the prophet as "the rod out of the stem of Jesse," on whom "the Spirit of the Lord should rest,"*

"The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,
The Spirit of Counsel and Might,
The Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord . .

* * * * *

And He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes,
Nor reprove after the hearing of His ears;
But with righteousness shall He judge the poor,
And reprove† with equity for the meek of the earth.
And He shall *smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,*
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

The contention of any, against Christ's powerful and all-pervading and subduing Word and Spirit, must be utterly vain and hopeless. He that will not be argued "with equity" into the meekness of repentance, must be "broken in pieces" by the stern arm of judgment.

17.—Let the Churches of Christ attend carefully

* Isa. xi. 1—4. See also Ps. ii. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 8; and Rev. xix. 15, 21. These passages, taken together, show that the "sword out of the mouth" is *not* to be taken literally, but figurative of the power of Christ's word and spirit in convincing, judging, and condemning.

† Or, as in margin, "argue."

to what is addressed to Pergamos. Let them stand firm against those who, like "Balaam," would draw many aside to false doctrine, to blend idolatry with the spiritual worship of Jehovah, and barter their Christian birthright for a "mess of pottage." Let them beware of those who, like the hated "Nicolaitanes," would introduce, and recommend by their baneful immoralities, practices which defile the fair virgin character of the Spouse of Christ, as holy and undefiled, the "temple of the Holy Ghost," and bought with the priceless sacrifice of the spotless Son of God.*

The exhortation to spirituality of worship and purity of life is worthy of our most careful regard, and obedient and cheerful compliance. It is accompanied with an encouraging *promise* to all those who cleave stedfastly to Christ, especially in days of rebuke and blasphemy, and "hold fast" to His name; not denying His faith, but renouncing "all ungodliness and worldly lusts." By overcoming in reliance on the grace which bringeth salvation, He will "give them to eat of the hidden

* The author has heard of, and known some ministers in the Christian Church to which he belongs, who have discarded by divorce their lawful wife, and married another. Such things, however tolerated by human law, are plainly forbidden by Christ's law, which is higher and holier (Matt. v. 32, and xix. 9), and ought not to be tolerated in any calling themselves ordained ministers of Jesus Christ. Is not this a crime somewhat like that of the "Nicolaitanes?" Compare Luke xvi. 18; Mark x. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

manna," the sacred type of the "living bread which came down from heaven," and which the Lord "gives for the life of the world."* He will grant them a sure provision for life's wilderness-journeyings here on earth, and an assurance of eternal provision of spiritual support and happiness in the life to come. The source of this heavenly food and the assurance of its power of everlasting sustenance, though "*hidden*" from the eyes of man, like the pot of manna laid up in the ark and consecrated by the glory of the Father, yet is known to the happy "victor" who possesses its foretaste here, and who has the prospect of its fulness of enjoyment hereafter. He lives and feeds by faith upon Christ, as his spiritual food and sustenance, day by day; and he looks forward to the "gain" of perpetual abundance and blissful supply in Christ's presence.†

Again, "to him that overcometh," He will give another token of His Divine approval and eternal favour. He will give him "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." This will serve to symbolize to him the purity and security of his everlasting felicity. As much so as if a sacred ring or precious "stone" were given him of the purest and fairest kind, as an indubitable pledge and testimonial of Divine reconciliation,

* John vi. 31—33, 51. See Exod. xvi. 32—34; Ps. xxv. 14.

† Philip. i. 21—23; Ps. xvi. 11.

friendship and love.* And, as a further proof of its value and abiding virtue to the possessor, it should be inscribed with a “new name;”† even that name which is above every name, in heaven and earth—“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”‡—

“The name all victorious,
Of Jesus our King!”——

the sacred name which, written on the cleansed tablet of the true believer’s heart by the Spirit of God, is an indelible pledge of belonging to Christ, and of being Christ’s own “for ever”—absolved from guilt, sealed with the Spirit of adoption, “justified,” “glorified!”§

The world, in general, know nothing of this. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” The “natural man”|| cannot enter into the nature of the heavenly change, which has come over the believing soul when it is received through the covenant of Divine love into the family of heaven. Yet the “conqueror” by faith knows in whom he

* Among the Greeks the gift of a “*white stone*,” was a token of absolution and acquittal, as a *black stone* was a mark of guilt and condemnation. It was also received as a mark of prosperity and success, and of royal favour.

† See Rev. iii. 12; and xix. 12, 13; Isa. lxxv. 15, 16; Philip. ii. 9—11.

‡ Jerem. xxiii. 6, and xxxiii. 16, יְהוָה צְדִיקוֹ; 1 Cor. i. 30. The conqueror at the Olympic Games had a token given him stating the reward which he was to receive, and his name inscribed. A new name, too, was often given to those who were raised to high offices of trust and favour in royal courts. See Gen. xli. 45; 2 Sam. xii. 25; Dan. i. 7.

§ Rom. viii. 17, 30. || 1 Cor. ii. xiv.

has believed ; and that *He* is able to keep what he commits to Him (even the safety of his immortal soul), until the “great day.”* This comforting assurance ought to be a matter of conviction on the mind and heart of every faithful member of Christ and child of God, as certainly as if a Divine messenger from above placed in the hands “a white stone,” or ring of friendship and unbroken affection, with the pledged name of the Supreme Author and Giver, “*The Lord our Righteousness*,” “*Mighty to save*,” inscribed therein, as an infallible sign of the sure and speedy fulfilment of all His gracious promises.†

O let us strive, above all things, to possess this cheering inward testimony of the Spirit, the comfortable assurance of the Divine acceptance, the sense of freedom from condemnation,‡ and admission to the present and everlasting favour of our heavenly Father, through faith in Christ Jesus ! All, perhaps, cannot attain to this at once, through some infirmity of the flesh, or dulness of understanding, and slowness of heart to believe all the counsel of God. Some will go mourning all their

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

† Rom. viii. 16, 17 ; 2 Cor. i. 22 ; v. 5 ; Ephes. iv. 30.

‡ Rom. viii. 1. The promised blessing here, “to him that overcometh,” is intended to be felt and owned “now.” Both “the hidden manna,” for the soul’s sustenance, and the “white stone,” with the new name, which only the receiver and not the world in general “knoweth,” are each for *present* gain, as well as *future* enjoyment.

days, as though they were vanquished, rather than victors. If the root of grace and love to Christ be strong and genuine within, let none be discouraged; if they cannot apprehend at present the fulness of the blessing in store, they must press onward "toward the mark."*

Let each desire earnestly "the best gifts;" and wait upon God, privately in prayer and publicly in His ordinances, for renewed strength. Let a *spiritual* worship and a *holy* life, boldly confessing Christ, testify whose we are, and whom we serve, in the midst of an evil and contentious world. Let men take knowledge of us, from the uniform consistency of a godly life, that we really belong to Christ; and that, while *in* the world, we are still separate from its evil.† A good conscience, void of wilful offence towards the holy God and also towards fellow-man, purified by the Spirit of Christ and His cleansing blood from dead works to serve the "living and true God," will act as a silent witness within, like the "*white stone*" given with the precious name of "Jesus" upon it—the talisman of Heaven—to make us feel the grace and recognise the power which has effected it. The inward consolations arising from lively faith must follow, as we feed regularly upon the "*hidden manna*," the true bread which came down from

* Philip. iii. 13, 14. This was affirmed of himself by one of the most favoured, eminent, and experienced of apostles.

† John xvii. 15.

heaven, and *that* shall cheer, sustain, and invigorate the immortal soul until the possession of the purchased inheritance.

“He giveth power to the faint ;
 And to them that have no might He increaseth strength.
 Even the youths shall faint and be weary ;
 And the young men shall utterly fall.
 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ;
 They shall mount up with wings as eagles ;
 They shall run, and not be weary,
 They shall walk, and not faint !”*

REV. II. 18—29.

THYATIRA.—JEZEBEL THREATENED.—EXHORTATION TO HOLD FAST.—THE PROMISE.

18.—And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass ; 19.—I know thy works and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last *to be* more than the first. 20.—Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornica-

* Isa. xl. 29—31 ; Ps. lxxxiv. 5—7.

cation, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21.—And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22.—Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23.—And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24.—But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25.—But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come. 26.—And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27.—And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28.—And I will give him the morning star. 29.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

18.—The fourth Church addressed is that of Thyatira, a city in the northern part of Lydia, and about a day's journey from Pergamos.* The art of dyeing purple was formerly well known here; hence, we hear of "*Lydia*,"† a seller of purple of the town of Thyatira, who was at Philippi when Paul preached the Gospel, and "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul."

No doubt this Lydia, a true convert to the faith of Christ, carried back to Pergamos the sacred truths which she had heard from the lips of Paul, and many may have been "turned to the Lord" through her instrumentality, as in the case of the woman of Samaria after the discourse of Jesus.‡

Under the authoritative attribute and title appropriate to the condition of this Church, as "Son of God;"§ as He, who in His Omniscience penetrates with a keen eye, like flaming fire, into the deepest recesses of the human heart, and discerns minutely every bearing and form of character; as

* The modern Turkish town, called Ak-hissar, or White Castle, contains about 1,000 houses, chiefly poor, and built of mud and earth. Greek and Armenian Christians number about one-third of the population.

† Acts xvi. 14. ‡ John iv. 39.

§ This Divine title is here used by Christ for the first time. In his humiliation on earth he usually spake of Himself as "Son of Man." Now, in his ascended glory at the right hand of the Father, He speaks with power and majesty as One with the Father on His throne. See Rev. iii. 21, and Ephes. i. 20—23.

He, too, who in the magnificence of His powerful presence pervades all creation, with melting feet, like burnished brass, searching and irresistible; the (19) Church of Pergamos is addressed by One who knows every thing relating to its bishop and people. He knows their "*works*"—all their condition, circumstances, and actions; their "*charity*,"*—in all its genuine manifestations of love to God and goodwill to man; their "*service*"—the active ministration of the word of Christ, and diligent attention to the wants and necessities of the poor and ignorant; their "*faith*"—in keeping to the sound doctrines of the Gospel, and fidelity in the discharge of their duties; their "*patience*"—maintaining stedfastly their principles when tried by opponents, and enduring many afflictions, with constancy; and their "*works*," "the last more than the first"†—not backsliding, nor being stationary, nor declining in their zeal for the honour and love of Christ, but, as time advanced, making progress in the Divine life, and character, and work; growing in knowledge, grace, and "fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

* See 1 Cor. xiii., where this pre-eminent and comprehensive Christian grace is fully described and explained.

† The "*works*," after "*patience*," being a repetition, should evidently be joined with the last clause. Then it would read, "thy patience, and thy last works," &c. This is a very honourable point of commendation, the reverse of which is too common among Christians and Churches. See Rev. ii. 4, 5.

20.—“Notwithstanding” these terms of high encomium, it appears that there was a person, or class of persons, of a very objectionable character and very unsound faith, tolerated in the midst of their communion, who ought to have been repudiated and expelled. The name “*Jezebel*,” whether real, or from resemblance to the idolatress and wicked wife of King Ahab,* sufficiently designates by what follows the kind of persons referred to. She set herself up as a teacher and prophetess.† Being uncalled of God, she became a propagator of false doctrines and a seducer of the servants of Christ to idolatry. By her attractions, either of person or of prophesying, she had drawn many aside into the snare of pagan and licentious practices, as though, under the garb of Christianity, sin were tolerated by the holy religion of the Gospel, and palliated under the cloak of outward sanctity.‡

21.—The Lord, who, with his piercing sun-beam eye, observed this defiling and seductive teaching in the Church, declares also that time had been

* 1 Kings xvi. 31, and xxi. 25. Any introduction of idolatrous practices and base principles into a Church may well be styled “*Jezebel*.”

† The term “*prophetess*” seems to refer, under this name Jezebel, to a class of schismatic preachers disturbing and defiling the Church.

‡ See this offence of associating the religion of Jehovah with the abominations of idol-worship reprobated—Exod. xxxiv. 12—16; 1 Cor. x. 20—28, and throughout the prophets.

given the “Jezebel” complained of, to repent and turn from her evil practices, and she had not repented. How constantly does this manifest the merciful *forbearance* of God our Judge and Saviour! “If any confess their sins,” after reproof, and forsake them, “He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.”* He does not hastily strike the transgressor, but allows him full time to reflect, when he is rebuked, and forsake his evil course before the threatened judgment fall and overtake him.†

22, 23.—The punishment in reserve for her impenitence, and to be shared in by all those who, as “her children,” have associated themselves with her,‡ is, that they shall suffer together a “great tribulation;” not like that which is *corrective*, in love, to try and purify the faith of God’s chil-

* 1 John i. 9; Rom. ii. 4, 5; 2 Pet. ii. 1—3, and iii. 9.

† See Rev. ix. 20, 21. The same is found in the Lord’s dealings with his people Israel and Judah under the Old Testament. The prophetic warning came to both long before the blow of punishment descended. The same is shown even before the Flood, when the Lord’s Spirit strove, and his *long-suffering* waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was 120 years preparing. Also, the judgment upon guilty Jerusalem pronounced by our Lord, was delayed about thirty-six years. See Gen. vi. 1—5, 11—13; Matt. xxiii. 36—38; xxiv. 1, 2; 1 Pet. iii. 20.

‡ Killing “her children,” as Ahab and Jezebel’s children were put to death by Jehu, seems to imply that the sin, here reproved and exposed, was that of a sect or system in which idol-worship (spiritual adultery), was a leading feature.

dren,* but such as shall prove strictly punitive because of persistent impenitence, and shall be like a deadly and incurable plague,† ending in their certain destruction.

This should be a solemn and wholesome lesson of warning to the Churches in general; that the Lord and Shepherd above is one who has His eyes continually upon the fold below; that He “searches the reins and heart,” and knows exactly the inner workings of the soul, its thoughts, motives, desires, conflicts, and afflictions. Therefore he can justly and equitably weigh all actions and “issues of life,” giving to each and all their just award, “according to their works.” He shows, incontestibly that He is a “just God and a Saviour,” who will by no means clear the guilty, but is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; who is no respecter of any man’s person, and who will visit the wilful and presumptuous offences of people with the rod, and their sins with merited scourges. He will thus “vindicate the honour of His holy Name, and make His praise glorious.”

24.—Unto the presiding bishop of the Church, and all others who were before commended in Thyatira for their faith, patience, charity, and good service (v. 19), and who still kept clear of

* John xvi. 33; Heb. xi. 5—11.

† “*Killing with death*,” is a Hebraism for signal plague and most certain death.

taint from the “Jezebel”-heresy and “depths of Satan” (as those corrupt principles may rightly be called*), the Lord addresses words of encouragement and re-assurance. He will put upon them no burden grievous to be borne; they shall be free, and escape entirely from the punishment denounced upon the others.

25.—So long as they hold fast the form of sound words and doctrine, and keep themselves unspotted from the world and the pollutions of idolatry, they may rest assured that, *when Christ comes*, He will receive them to Himself, and they shall be prepared, at whatever time or in whatever place, to meet Him at His advent.

26, 27.—A *promise* is given by Christ to every one belonging to the Church, who overcomes the dangers and temptations to which they are exposed, and who keeps His words in obedient and faithful remembrance “to the end,” that he shall share with Him in the royal honours and privileges of ruling over the subject-nations of the earth; when He Himself shall come and claim the dominion and glory, and shall assert His authority and

* Nothing can show a *deeper artifice of Satan*, to beguile and destroy “unstable souls,” than when he can lull to a *sleep of death* by the poisoned cup of sensuous gratification, mixed with religious formalism. This “mystery of iniquity,” this “*masterpiece of Satan*,” as it has been well-called, will be brought frequently, and in a great variety of forms, under notice in the course of the Apocalypse.

sway, as "received of the Father." Then, with resistless might, as "with a rod of iron," shall He crush the unruly and rebellious beneath the feet of His saints, and break the neck of all disobedience as easily as a "potter's vessel" is dashed to shivers out of the hands of the maker.

28.—Another remarkable token of Divine favour is here added, in the gift of the "Morning Star!" This sublime appendage to the rewards promised to the victor, in this Church, conveys to the mind the most beautiful symbol in the heavens. The "morning star" is the certain harbinger of coming day; the token of the shadows of the night of death departing, and the light of the day of life coming.* It is the "bright and morning star" of resurrection in Christ Himself, as He comes to raise from the night and sleep of the grave to the longed-for day of glory, all that have departed in the true faith, having "kept His words unto the end." Then, "They that be wise shall

* The gift of "*the morning star*" by Christ to the victor cannot be a gift of Himself, except as He is styled, "*the Resurrection and the Life*." The meaning here, therefore, seems not exactly the same as that in Rev. xxii. 16, where Christ takes this title to Himself, together with other titles, which show Him to be the true Light of Israel, and "the Day-spring from on high." But the gift of "the morning star" to the victor, here, may either mean *the bright and beauteous light of glory*, to shine in heaven as a star of great magnitude, betokening eternal day; or, the "*first resurrection*"-life and light in Christ, as the harbinger of eternal light and glory succeeding.

shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”* Then, in accordance with the former promise (v. 26, 27.),

“The upright shall have dominion over them in the *morning*”—

in the bright morning of the “first resurrection!”—the bright morning introductory to the fulness of joy and ineffable glory following.

29.—These commendations, threatenings, and promises, intimately concern all Churches; so that all may learn to derive some instruction and admonition, and some warning and encouragement, from careful and devout meditation. The subjects, as in the case of the whole seven Churches, are suitable to all epochs of Church history, and to professing believers in Christ, in all ages. They are not of private interpretation, or limited significance, but for public and universal use and benefit.

Let us press earnestly toward the mark for the prize of this “high calling of God in Christ Jesus, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before.”† Let it be the uppermost desire of our hearts, to be like-minded with Christ, “counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

* Dan. xii. 3; Luke i. 78, 79; 2 Pet. i. 19.

† See Philip. iii. 8—14.

Jesus our Lord ; that we may know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death ; *if by any means we might attain to the resurrection of the dead.*”*

O may we thus approve ourselves to the Heart-Searcher, that He may see our sincerity and activity of faith, our service, self-denying and laborious, in His cause ; our charity, our patience, and our last works even more and better than the first. So, “holding fast” to the end, we shall be able to escape “the corruptions which are in the world, through lust ;” and shall not be condemned for a lifeless formality in our access to God, “worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.”* Then, at last, the glorious prize of the triumphant victor in the Christian race shall be ours—the crown of resurrection-life and glory, the ruling honour with Christ, as assessors with Him on His throne of “power over the nations ;” together with the beauteous auroral “Morning Star !”

“Till the day dawn,
And the Day-Star arise,—
Spirit of gentle love,
Thou tempest-calming Dove,

* Philip. iii. 11. The Greek word for “*resurrection*” here is not *αναστασις*, the ordinary word for the general resurrection, but *εξαναστασις*, which signifies the *resurrection from among the dead*, the distinguished and better, the “first resurrection.” See Dan. xii. 2 ; Heb. xi. 35, and Rev. xx. 4, 5.

† Rom. i. 25.

“ Come, and within me dwell !
Come, and all gloom dispel !
Most blessed Comforter,
My weary footsteps cheer !
O, Light and Lamp Divine,
Upon my midnight shine !
Better than star or moon,
Brighter than day's bright noon,
O, let Thy joyous ray,
Turn all my night to day ! ”

REV. III. 1-6.

CHURCH IN SARDIS.—DEAD CONDITION.—IMPER-
FECT WORKS.—A FEW NAMES.—PROMISE.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write ; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead. 2.—Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3.—Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4.—Thou hast a few names even in

Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5.—He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

1.—The attribute chosen by our Lord for His address to the Church of Sardis* is, "*he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars*" (i. 4, 16). Perfect knowledge and perfect power are here associated in His one Divine Person.

* "Sardis" was the ancient capital of Lydia. It was "the lady of kingdoms" in the time of Croesus, B.C. 548. It was nearly destroyed by an earthquake about the Christian era, but was rebuilt, Melito, one of its bishops, about A.D. 170, was a man of great learning and piety. Another of its bishops, Artemidorus, was present at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325. The ravages of the Saracens and the Turks have reduced this once celebrated city to a heap of ruins: "There were before me the fanes of a dread religion, the tombs of forgotten monarchs, and the palm tree that waved in the banquet-hall of kings; while the feeling of desolation was doubly heightened by the calm sweet sky above me, which, in its unfading brightness, shone as purely as when it beamed upon the golden dreams of Croesus." (See Emerson's "Letters.")

“When He ascended up on high, He obtained gifts for men,” the sevenfold gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.* He has all authority to rule and govern the Churches, having the “stars,” or chief ministers of those Churches, under His supreme control, appointing or removing them at pleasure.

The “works” of the Church in Sardis were well-known to Him. They “*have a name to live,*” but it was like an empty profession; because they were known to be spiritually “*dead.*” There was a very general want of true religious life among them, while they still were outwardly attached to the faith of Christ, and the pure religion of the Gospel. There was profession without practice; and formality without vitality. They were wanting, as a Church, in the essential characteristics of a living and fruitful branch in the True Vine. They made a fair show, it may be, in the flesh, having the form of godliness; but they are reckoned as “dead before God” for want of the Spirit, “denying the power thereof,” and bringing forth no “fruits meet for repentance.”

2.—This was a state of things very much to be deplored; a false position unworthy of a Church of Christ. They must, therefore, rise from this

* John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7, 13, 14; compared with Isa. xi. 2; lxi. 1; John iii. 34. The defect of the Church of Sardis was evidently want of spirituality. The city was noted for its love of pleasures, and, by this the “Spirit” is sure to be grieved.

dead, apathetic condition, and seek to recover their lost life of zeal and activity. They are exhorted to watchfulness and renewal of spiritual strength, by waiting upon the Lord. "The things which remain," but "are ready to die," may still be quickened into Divine life by the gift of the Spirit from above, in the hands of Christ. While any remainder of life and pulsation of heart is discernible in the Church, or any of its members, there is still hope ; though disease be prevalent in the body, and the action of the vital system be "imperfect." The Good Physician of soul and body is ever ready to intercede for His people's life and health ; if only they carry their case to the mercy-seat, and entrust it to His all-powerful advocacy and loving and skilful care.

3.—They are called upon, through the compassionate regard of the Shepherd of souls for every one professing his name, to "remember" how the treasure of the Gospel had been committed to them, and they had heard and received the word at the first with gladness, and joined themselves to Christ by profession of faith, and by admission into His covenant of grace, in baptism ; how they had engaged, under the seal and pledge of this covenant, to "hold fast" their repentance towards God and faith in Jesus, without relaxing or wavering. They are exhorted and roused to retrace their lost ground ; to return to their duty, repenting of their sins, assured of His pardon if they will

believe, persevere, and “hold fast” to the principles of the Gospel.*

But if they refuse to “watch” and guard against the evil, and still reject the merciful warning voice which speaks to them in love; then, He must come upon them in anger, and suddenly, “like a thief in the night,”† when they are not aware nor expecting the hour of visitation, rob them of their false confidence, and consign their Church to deserved ignominy and shame.

4.—“*Even in Sardis,*” the most decayed, and the least commendable of the seven Churches, there was a small and faithful “remnant according to the election of grace.” A “few names”‡ still survived in the midst of the general apathy and destitution of godliness. These were specially known to the Good Shepherd, who is well acquainted with His flock, and calls all “*His own*” by name,§ and they follow Him and know His voice. These “names” were precious to Him, and distinguished by Him, particularly as there were “few” in this Church that had come out from the many merely professing to belong to Him. Followers of the Lamb, here, in humiliation, it is

* Heb. x. 23; Philip. iv. 1.

† Matt. xxiv. 42—44; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3; 2 Pet. iii. 10. See also Rev. xvi. 15.

‡ “ὀνόματα” has sometimes the prophetic signification of persons of some distinction in society and rank, as well as in character and estimation. See Rev. xi. 13.

§ John x. 3, 4.

promised to them that they shall be with Him hereafter in His glory. As they had kept their Christian "garments" clean from the pollution of false doctrines and the defilements of the evil world, and of the unruly flesh, in evidence of their soundness of heart and sincerity of faith, they shall be clothed in the heavenly kingdom with the "white raiment" of victory and eternal purity provided by Him, to fit them to walk with Him in the palace-courts of heaven, and appear "worthy" through His merit, and accepted in the presence of the Father.

5.—This pure and heavenly garment of salvation is promised as the distinguished privilege of those who "overcome," and continue true to their faith even unto the end. They shall be found in the realms of bliss, amongst the great white-robed multitude,* who shall be permitted to stand before the throne of the Father, surrounded by the angels, presented and confessed by the Son as completely absolved from all their sins through faith in His blood, and justified for ever by His righteousness.† They are the "blessed of the Lord." He sees in them of "the travail of His soul, and is satisfied." They are the "prolonging of His days;" the spoil gathered from the strong enemy; the pleasure of Jehovah prospering in His hand!

These "few" but favoured "names" at Sardis

* Rev. vii. 9, and xix. 8. † Isai. liii. 10—12, and lxi. 10.

are assured, together with all those in the Church who shall repent and overcome in like manner, that they shall have their names written in "the book of life,"* in the great record of the worthy heirs of salvation; and no power in earth or hell shall be able to blot out their names, once written there, from the sacred enrolment of eternity.

6.—Again, let all the Churches and their Christian members "hear," and attend to, for their special profiting, what the Lord of Glory declares by His Spirit concerning this Church of Sardis.

O let us not, like this lifeless Church, allow our faith to fall to so low a state as to be looked upon by the all-discerning Saviour and His Spirit as "ready to die." But may we strengthen "the things which remain;" and earnestly aim after a revival of our decaying and neglected graces. We must bear in mind, that the lamp of profession alone will not profit in the day of the Bridegroom's coming. There must be "oil in the vessel" of the heart, as well as light from the lamp in the hands. "Foolish," indeed, will they be pronounced who would not bestir themselves, until it was too late, to obtain the needful provision of

* See Philip. iv. 3, also Rev. xiii. 8, xx. 12, xxi. 27, and xxii. 19. "The book of life," like the "book of remembrance," (Mal. iii. 16.) is that record in the Divine mind, which, like a lasting register of names of citizens among men, may be said to contain the everlasting remembrance and memorial of the redeemed citizens of heaven.

grace from Him who is so ready to bestow it
“without money and without price.”

O that we may be of the same character as those “few names” in Sardis, who “watch,” and pray, and keep the garments of a good profession undefiled with the love of the world, or any of its ungodly pleasures, or unrighteous gains. Then, can we never be taken off our guard, as unprepared for the coming of death, or of the Heavenly King, however sudden either of these events may be. Clothed with His spotless righteousness, by faith,* and “washed in the all-cleansing fountain of His precious blood,” we shall be admitted freely to His presence, and “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;” being pronounced worthy, through His worthiness, to walk “in white;” and he will confess us before the Father and His angels, as His own chosen and beloved, with names of honour irrevocably enrolled among “the saints in light.”

“Say, watchman, what of the night?

Do the dews of the morning fall?

Have the orient skies a border of light,

Like the fringe of a funeral pall?

“The night is fast waning on high,

And soon shall the darkness flee!

And the morn shall spread o’er the blushing sky,

And bright shall its glories be

* * * * *

* Philip. iii. 9.

“But, watchman, what of the night,
When the arrow of death is sped,
And the grave, which no glimmering stars can light,
Shall be my sleeping bed ?

“That night is near ! and the cheerless tomb
Shall keep thy body in store,
Till the morn of eternity rise on the gloom—
And night shall be no more !”

REV. III. 7-13.

PHILADELPHIA.—THE KEY OF DAVID.—THE OPEN
DOOR.—THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.—THE PRO-
MISE.

7.—And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write ; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth ; 8.—I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9.—Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know

that I have loved thee. 10.—Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11.—Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12.—Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. 13.—He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

7.—The sixth Church addressed by epistle is that of "Philadelphia." This was another noted city of Lydia, south-east of Sardis, in the plain of Hermus.* To give weight to the words of the

* "*Philadelphia*"—brotherly love—was named after Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos from B.C. 159 to 138. A few years later it became subject to the Romans. Its bishops are mentioned as attending the early councils of the Church. The city fell under the power of the Turks, A.D. 1392. It is still a place of some importance, having a Greek archbishop and several clergy. Its preservation, in time of dreadful war, is, in a high

epistle, the appropriate character and title of the Lord Jesus, here used, is (1) "The Holy," as the Holy One of Israel, born into the world, the Incarnate Immanuel, "God with us," "the Son of the Highest," "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and requiring holiness, after His image, in all that belong to His Church. (2) "The True," as He who is The Truth itself, the substance of all true wisdom and sound doctrine, and able to discern the true state of all hearts and characters; (3) The Possessor of "the key of David," ready to open and shut, without let or hindrance, having absolute control, given to Him of the Father by right of redemption, over "the house of David," in particular,* and over all Churches, in general, to admit or exclude from the honours of His kingdom, according to His perfectly wise rules of justice, equity, and rectitude. This "key" is in the hand of Christ, and of none other; it is not the right of angels, or apostles, priests or popes.† But it is used by degree, remarkable. When Tamerlane destroyed and obliterated, in streams of blood, the names and seats of churches, Philadelphia, though surrounded on every hand with death and ruin, was, as if by a miracle, saved from destruction.—(Bible Manual.)

* Isai. xxii. 22.

† The holding of the "keys" by the Pope, as a claim of Romish *Supremacy*, as successor to St. Peter, and having power to open and shut the door of salvation to sinners, is an act of base and blasphemous presumption. The apostles *were never* bishops, and had *no successors*. Peter had no supremacy over the other apostles (see Matt. xx. 25—28.) The apostolic

Christ himself, viz., *opening* to all who truly believe in Him, repenting of their sins, the privileges and blessings of pardon, peace, and eternal life. Whereas they only are excluded, not who err according to the world's judgment of fellow-man, but who are known to be impenitent and unbelieving in heart, and reprobate in life, as clearly discernible by the only holder of "the key,"—the King himself.

8.—The "works" of this Church, as of all others, are perfectly known, and accurately weighed. There was seen some "little strength" remaining in the Church and its bishop. An open door was still set before them, and none but He who opened it could shut, since He alone possessed "the key" of power and authority. This "open door"* implied, no doubt, that the way of salvation and progress in grace and holiness, for high service and privilege was fully open before them: they had not so striven against the "Spirit" as to cause Him to be grieved and to depart from them. There might be hindrances and obstacles on the part of the enemy; there might be weakness,

shutting and opening, binding and loosing, could only be exercised by the immediate power of Christ, as imparted in the supernatural prompting of *the Spirit of God*. (See Matt. xvi. 18, 19, Luke xxii. 25, 26, John xx. 22, 23, Rom. i. 16.) The "Rock," *πετρα*, on which the whole Church is built, is the "Rock of Ages," even Christ; *Peter*, *πετρος*, is only a "stone" of it, in itself moveable, fragile, and weak.

* The symbolical meaning of the "*open door*," as set open

and some want of energy, and lack of numbers and strength on their own part, yet, so long as they “denied not His name,” and held to the faith and love of Christ, and “kept His word,” means of grace would be supplied them according to their need, and Divine strength given them according to their day; and also their opportunities of usefulness, of ministering the word to others and extending the truth, as a high honour, as well as a sacred duty in all who belong to His Church, would be continued to them; with free access to the throne of grace, and the promise of the heavenly kingdom without reserve, or possibility for man or evil spirit to hinder it.*

9.—They may be well assured, as if they *beheld* it with their eyes, that whatever enemies they had, though professedly members of the synagogue, and children of the seed of Abraham, yet He would prove them to be of the “synagogue of Satan,”† false to the faith and unworthy of the name of “Jews.” They would feel the force of His righteous hand, and be brought down from their pride and violence; and be soon made to

by Him who held “*the key*,” has very probably a wide signification, as above. The leading idea seems, that power to save was completely in the hands of Christ, as given to Him of the Father, to confer the blessing of eternal life, and all the hopes and privileges of the Gospel on them that come to Him.

* Acts xiv. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; and Coloss. iv. 3.

† See Rev. ii. 9; John viii. 44; Rom. ix. 6, 7.

bend in lowly homage at the feet of His people, in forced subjection and acknowledgment of the Lord's presence on their side, and His manifest favour and love towards them.*

10.—As long as they kept His word, and obeyed it, bearing their cross after Him, and patiently endured their trials, He promises to keep them from being overwhelmed in the hour of great temptation coming upon the (Roman) earth, which would test their "courage" and constancy, in days of severe and universal alarm and persecution,† and prove who were faithful and who were not. The Lord, who watches over His Church, will certainly be with His true and steadfast, loving and obedient children in the most fearful and trying seasons, public or private. His promise is firm and unfailing, under all circumstances and at all periods of trouble, to His flock. His protecting care will never be withdrawn; His providing bounty can never be exhausted; His purpose of deliverance can never be diverted or overruled by any assault or device of the adversary.

* Prov. xvi. 7; Isa. lx. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

† The hour of temptation is thought to refer here to the Roman persecutions under Trajan and other emperors; and, also it may have some allusion to earthquakes, which often visited Philadelphia and its neighbour cities. It may also refer, onward and prophetically, to other Churches and periods, even the last days, when "*perilous times shall come*" (2 Tim. iii. 1,) and to "the great tribulation" (Dan. xii. 1), from which the true Philadelphian Church shall be removed.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation; and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”*

11.—However safe His people may be under His protection, and assured of their preservation unto the kingdom, in spite of the malice of the enemy; still it becomes them ever to be on the *watch* against the hour of *Christ's Coming*, and the season of danger which is ever imminent in the midst of this evil, changing, and warring world.

“*The hour of temptation*” may come as suddenly as His own final Advent to judgment. The forewarned are expected to be forearmed. Only by watchfulness unto prayer, and vigilance against the common enemy, can the people of God hope to be kept faithful unto the end.† Only by looking for Christ, watching daily at His gates, “praying always,” can they keep their heavenly armour bright and in good temper for ready use on the first occasion. The active, watchful, patient and prayerful Christian, who is practical as well as faithful, is the only one likely to “hold fast” to the true principles of the Gospel, at all times; and thus having “*the crown*” in store, and by faith in

* 2 Peter ii. 9.

† It is worthy of remark how the early Christians were kept watchful by the frequent alarms of the Lord being at hand. Rev. i. 3, ii. 5, 16, iii. 3, 4, xvi. 15, Phil. iv. 5, James v. 8.

possession, he *cannot be robbed of it*; nor can he lose the consciousness of its sure inheritance while he looks to Christ, and keeps eternal life in view.

12.—Our Lord, in the opening address to this Church, represents Himself as having “the key of David;” and, here, in the closing promise He is seen declaring His supreme power, authority, and determination, agreeably with the Father’s will, to admit the conqueror in the Church to the highest privileges of the “Temple” above. The greatest and most lasting honours from “the Holy and the True,” are promised to “him that overcometh,” and are implied (1) in being made a *pillar* therein, never to be removed from its place;* “established, strengthened, settled;” like the pillars called “Jachin” and “Boaz” in Solomon’s temple,† for ornament and support, solidity and exaltation; to “go no more out,” since no power in creation could avail to destroy the glory of the distinguished victor’s crown; “firm as a rock,” he should have a sure abiding-place in the Church triumphant, never desiring to go out, and none being ever permitted to cast him out. (2) In having three names inscribed, as it were for

* It has been sarcastically remarked, respecting Philadelphia, by the historian Gibbon, that she alone of the seven Churches has been saved “by prophecy or courage.” The very name now given to the town,—“Allah Shehr”—“City of God,”—and a solitary grand pillar of an ancient church, still standing, seem to remind us of the prophecy and promise, v. 13.

† 1 Kings vii. 21.

notability and security, upon the frame-work of the “*pillar*,” *viz.*, the *name of God the Father*,—shewing the inalienable purpose of Jehovah to keep all those whom He has given to the Son, that they may be with Him where He is, and may behold His glory which the Father had given Him from the foundation of the world; also, the *name of the Father’s city*, containing happy inhabitants and citizens—all “*inheritors of the kingdom*,”—all who are children of God by adoption, and heirs, according to the promise, of eternal life,—who shall come down, together with Christ, at the last day, as the “*New Jerusalem*,” out of heaven from the Father, to reign with Christ on earth in His glory: and, lastly, the new name* of *Jesus Himself*,—the Saviour of sinners,—*The Lord our Righteousness*,—signifying to angels, and principalities and powers in heavenly places through all eternity, the wonderful work of redemption, in bringing countless sons and daughters from the depths of sin and degradation, misery and mortality on earth, to the height of heavenly holiness and felicity, honour and immortality!

13. We cannot but listen to the distinguished blessings promised to “*him that overcometh*” in connection with the Philadelphian Church, and the character ascribed to those who shall inherit them, with adoring gratitude and praise, with ardent desire and godly ambition. O should not

* See Rev. ii. 17.

everyone who reads and hears what the Spirit saith to all Christians here, from the example of this eminent Church, be roused to give up the follies of this world, and renounce its vexations and strifes, for the solid and lasting, pure and heavenly pleasures of undefiled religion, for the love of Christ,—“The Holy and The True,” and the delights of brotherly union and concord?*

“O how sweet the hallow'd union,
O how blest the pure communion,
Of the family of God!
When in peace together dwelling,
Kindred love each bosom swelling,—
This is pleasure's true abode!

* * * *

“Zion! 'tis Jehovah's dwelling!
There, from purest fountains welling,
Flow the streams of peace and love!
Israel's wants and woes redressing,
There the Lord commands the blessing.—
Everlasting life above!”

May the promise be secured to us of a place in this heavenly temple and city of our God, by our

* Some have been characterized, among modern Christian societies and communities, as most resembling the Philadelphian, or “Brotherly Love”-Church, in name, and, perhaps, in soundness of creed and exemption from Romanising tendencies. The Moravian Church, called originally, “*Unitas Fratrum*,” (United Brethren), some branches of the Wesleyans, the better sort of the Plymouth Brethren, and the Evangelical Alliance composed of members from the Church of England and the orthodox Churches and denominations of Christian brethren in Great Britain, and from all parts of the world.

keeping close to Christ's word, resisting the temptations around us, whether in doctrine, form of worship or moral practice, peculiar to our day.* May we never be led to deny that "name which is above every name," which is so precious to the believer,† as music to his ears, and light to his eyes, as fragrance to the heart, the balm and cure for every wound and care.‡

So may we be found, hereafter, among the privileged citizens in the "New Jerusalem," and as pillars in the Divine temple, to stand secure in the rich blessings of redeeming grace for ever; to go no more out, and taste no more sorrow, to be subject to no more temptations, to endure no more conflict; but to enjoy the sweets of unbroken friendship and fellowship, "the crown" of untarnished honour and glory, the perpetual unction and indwelling of

"PURE UNBOUNDED LOVE."

* The above may be one signification of "*the hour of temptation*," which is to try every one, viz., *that temptation peculiar to the day and age, and troubles of the Church under which each may live.*

† Cant. i. 3.—"Thy name is as ointment poured forth,
Therefore do the virgins love Thee."

‡ See Hymn on *Christ's Love*, by Dr. Doddridge, beginning,
"Jesus! I love Thy saving name."

REV. III. 14—22.

THE LAODICEAN CHURCH.—LUKEWARMNESS REBUKED—THREATENED.—COUNSELLED TO REPENT,—AND OPEN THE DOOR TO CHRIST.—THE PROMISE.

14.—And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. 15.—I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16.—So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17.—Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: 18.—I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. 19.—As many as I love, I rebuke and

chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20.—Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21.—To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14.—“*Laodicea*,” the last of the seven Churches, was a large and wealthy city at this time, situated about forty miles east of Ephesus, not far from Colossæ, on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.* St. Paul makes allusion to the Laodicean Church in his epistle to the Colossians.† He had “never seen their face in the flesh,” but he had heard through Epaphras, their messenger, that false

* The city of Laodicea is now almost lost in ruins, having been destroyed by earthquakes and the ravages of the Turks. The site of the whole rising ground, where this flourishing city once stood, is one vast tumulus of ruins. “The name of Christianity,” (says Mr. Emerson,) “is forgotten, and the only sounds that disturb the silence of its desertion are the tones of the *Muezzin*, whose voice from the distant village (Eski-Hassar, or Old Castle) proclaims the ascendancy of Mohammed. Laodicea is even more solitary than Ephesus.”

† Coloss. ii. 1, iv. 15, 16.

teachers had propagated pernicious doctrines there, as well as at Colossæ. He then desires his Epistle to the Colossians to be sent forward to the Laodiceans, and one which had been written from Laodicea to be read by the Colossians.

The Church had fallen into a state of spiritual languor and lukewarmness, worldly ease, luxury, and self-satisfaction. The attribute appropriate to the subject of the address of Christ on this occasion is that of "The Amen, the faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the Creation of God," the Invariable and Constant One, Who cannot deceive, as He cannot be deceived; Who witnessed with all zeal and earnestness, for the truth of the Gospel; Who discerns, with the clearest evidence, the true state of every heart; Who is no mere fallible creature, like man or angel, but One with the Father in creation from the beginning—Head and Governor, with Him, of all things created.*

15.—Well may such an One say, "I know thy works!" And when He rebukes evil in the Church, as its Head Pastor, we may be sure He does it with a keen discerning eye, and accurate incontestible judgment.

He upbraids them for their lukewarmness of heart, being "*neither cold nor hot.*" He would rather that they were one or the other.

* Ephes. i. 21—23; Coloss. i. 15—18; Heb. i. 3; Rev. i. 5, 6, and ii. 19.

A determined state, one way or the other,* presents a better aspect of honesty and sincerity of purpose, than that of the hypocrisy of religious pretence and the ungratefulness of wilful declension. Indecision of heart, when profession has been made of heartiness, is more offensive to Christ and deserves a greater condemnation, than the state of those who have never had the Gospel's cheering light, nor heard its warning and awakening Truth.† Of these latter, He can expect nothing but coldness and deadness. But of those who have been admitted into the Church of Christ, He rightly and reasonably looks for love to Him, warmth and zeal in His service, and devotedness of mind, soul, and strength to the glory of God.

16.—Where these graces are wanting, or dormant, as in the Laodiceans, He “cannot away with” their outward forms and show of religion.‡ Their destitution of inward life and zeal, their indecision and indifference of Christian character, their lukewarmness and languidness of spirit, are so distasteful and disagreeable to Him, that He is ready to reject them as a thing loathsome to His taste, and nauseous to the last degree, so as not to be retained in the mouth.§

* 1 Kings xviii. 21. † Isa. i. 13—15; Matt. xv. 9.

† See John iii. 19; Matt. xi. 24; Luke xi. 22—26, xii. 16, 17, xiii. 28—30.

§ The similitude is very striking to shew the utmost possible displeasure and disgust.

17.—They are farther deserving of rebuke from “The Faithful Witness,” because of their boastful pride, and dependence upon their increased riches and multiplied worldly goods, their outward grandeur, and fancied competency and abundance of treasures—temporal and spiritual.* They appeared perfectly at ease, self-complacent, and satisfied, as though they needed nothing more from God or man. With much forbearance and loving-kindness, waiting still to be gracious to them, if they will take advice and repent, He reminds them of their real wretchedness and misery, poverty, blindness, and nakedness before Him in a religious sense, while utterly destitute of true grace and love in the heart; and wanting in all the living principles of a saving faith, spiritually indifferent and carnally self-dependent.

18.—He counsels them, therefore, in their poverty and wretchedness, to come in earnest to Him for the “true riches;” the gold tried in the fire of the sanctuary of Heaven—the inestimable gift of faith, and Christ’s love and peace in the heart. This gold is not of an earthly mould or corruptible nature. It is not purchaseable; it must be obtained as a gift from God.† It enriches the soul with true happiness. It is unlike all the precious gems and metals of this world. It

* See Ps. lxii. 10; Hosea xii. 8; Zech. xi. 5; Luke vi. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; James v. 1—3.

† Ephes. ii. 8.

cannot grow dim by decay, nor be lost by death. Received gratuitously from Christ, through faith in His name, it would be as the “pearl of great price” to all that obtained it,* or as the gem of wisdom, which makes a man truly rich and blessed—

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding;
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise
of silver;
And the gain thereof than fine gold!
She is more precious than rubies;
And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared
unto her.†

This golden gift may have its trial here, in the fire of affliction and persecution, yet it shall only come forth brighter and richer in beauty, and “it shall be found unto praise, and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”‡ He counsels them, also, in their nakedness, to procure and buy of Him (as in the former case, “without money and without price,”) “*white raiment*,”§ the true clothing of saints, the *justifying righteousness* from Him; which is the proper accompaniment of faith,|| and by which, as imputed to the believer, the “*shame*” of his natural depravity and guilt is covered, and all his defilement of sin and uncleanness is done away and hidden from the sight of Divine justice for

* Matt. xiii. 44—46. † Prov. iii. 13—15.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 7.; James ii. 5.

§ See Rev. vii. 13, xvi. 15, xix. 8. || Rom. iii. 22—24.

ever,* through the blood of the Lamb and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost.

Again, He counsels them, in their *blindness*, to obtain from Him, according to the promise from the Father to all that ask through His name, the true *collyrium*, or eye-salve of the Gospel, which shall enable all, however dim-sighted or blind before with regard to the things of eternity, to see clearly the character of God, the way of salvation, and the glory to be revealed in the inheritance of the saints.

Until people are so anointed with the grace of the Spirit on the understanding and heart, they cannot see the things which belong to their peace; they cannot know the hope of their calling, nor entertain a conception of the greatness of God's power towards them that believe.† The way of salvation is clouded with mystery, while the eyes of the understanding are unenlightened with the beams of the "Sun of Righteousness."

But, let the healing "eye-salve" be taken and applied according to the true Gospel prescription, by asking the Father, through Christ, for the gift of the Holy Spirit; then the darkness will pass away, and the true light shine. The "scales" of

* The conscious sinfulness of the soul is its unclothed shame. When sin is covered over by atonement, and that atonement made over to the believing, God's people are said to be clothed in white raiment, and "shall never be ashamed."—Rom. xi. 33.

† Ephes. i. 17, 18.

ignorance and folly, prejudice and unbelief, will immediately fall from the eyes, as in the case of Paul, after his conversion.* That which was not seen at all, or only dimly, of “the excellency of Christ and the beauty of holiness,” shall now appear, as by a day-beam, penetrating the deep recesses of the soul with the blaze of meridian brightness. The eyes of the believer are opened to see and own his natural blindness, and to look to Christ alone for the light of life—and he is not disappointed of his hope.†

19.—The rebukes, which Christ and the Spirit give to those who nominally believe and have light, but are really blind and far off from salvation for want of spiritual life, are not designed in judgment, but in mercy; not to discourage, or drive to desperation, or to confirm in blindness; but to melt to obedience, and chasten in love, and bring to the footstool of Divine grace in true repentance.

* Acts ix. 18.

† Compare the case of the Pharisees, so severely reproved by Christ for not believing: “If ye were blind”—*i. e.*, were conscious of sin and acknowledged it—“ye had not had sin;”—had it not in the same measure of condemnation, not retaining it upon the conscience, while confessing it to God; “but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” While satisfied with a state of unbelief and alienation from God, and with self-righteousness, your natural sinful heart must remain unchanged, since you seek not God’s only-appointed means of pardon and cure.—John ix. 41, and xv. 22—24.

All God's chastenings of His children are fatherly and loving.* They are marks of His mindfulness; not to leave them to themselves to perish. He chides, occasionally, that they may profit perpetually. His rebukes and chastenings may appear sometimes grievous, and heavy to be borne; and the spirit almost faints, and sinks within, as if ready to fail, before Him. Still, it must be remembered, that the rod, however severe, is ruled by inscrutable wisdom; and the scourge, however angry it may seem as an instrument of evil, is really a corrective for good, and influenced by infinite love. He will not allow the affliction to proceed too far. In His own best time He will moderate its intensity, and when it has fulfilled its proper work of humbling the soul to submissive penitence, and of rekindling zeal for His honour, and love for His name and service; then He will remove the burthen, and bring forth deliverance.

20.—In another beautiful and awakening image, the Lord of the Church proves His forbearing patience and long-suffering entreaty for the rousing of the slumberer, the recovery of the fallen, and the restoring of the lost. He represents Himself as pleading most perseveringly with the lukewarm and unwilling; standing as an anxious friend or brother at the door of the sinner's

* Heb. xii. 3, 6; Job v. 17; Prov. iii. 11; Ps. ciii. 8—4.

heart, overspread, it may be, with the thorns and briars of much neglect and careless living ; to find admission, if possible, for His light and presence, His love and peace. He knocks again, and again ; and no answer is returned from within. He has light in His hand, ready to dispel the darkness of the inner chamber of the soul, where Satan is binding his chained captive fast in the iron grasp of death. Will the inmate not awake and listen to His loud knocking, and attend to His gracious voice, as He calls, like the mariners to Jonah in the wave-tossed vessel,

“What meanest thou, O sleeper?
Arise! call upon thy God!”*—

Too oft, alas! all is as the stillness of the grave within, while Christ stands knocking repeatedly without,† for the entranced slumberer seems like the determined sluggard in the Proverbs,‡

“A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep ;
So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,
And thy want as an armed man.”

But, if any one listen, and “*open the door*” to

* Jonah i. 6.

† Cant. v. 2. In a great variety of ways the symbol of Christ's knocking seems realized ; in providential dealings, in sickness, bereavements, losses, disappointments ; in gracious appeals of His word and Spirit to the heart and mind and conscience. See Emblematic View. ‡ Prov. vi. 10, 11.



Christ, to admit His pleading and convincing voice; to believe the truth and obey the precept; to hate the evil and love the good; then, He enters in at once, and purposes to become the Guest and Friend of that person, and to form an acquaintance and fellowship with him on the most familiar and advantageous terms. He will not only enter into covenant with him of sworn alliance and peace; but He will treat him as an equal, a companion and beloved brother. He will deign to sit down with him, as at a royal banquet, and "sup with him,"* as at a friendly feast of great joy and gladness, and where sorrow and sighing are cast for ever away.

21.—A rich promise is attached to the willing admission of Christ, by the Spirit, to the heart of the believer when made a true child of God and fellow-heir with Christ in glory; that, in *overcoming* doubt and distrust, fondness of ease and riches, lukewarmness and worldly love, he shall have the indescribable blessing and honour,—the highest which mortal can attain in the realms of light,—of sitting with Him on His throne on earth, when He comes at the last from His place at the Father's right hand, from His throne in the heaven

* See Isa. xxv. 6, 7; Luke xii. 37. There is some indirect allusion, probably, in the above, to the ordinance and sacrament of the Lord's Supper, where Christ promises His *spiritual* presence and fellowship with the true and faithful communicants, until His coming again. Luke xxiv. 25; Cor. xi. 26.

of heavens.* As certainly as He is now set down at the right hand of the Father on His throne above, so, assuredly, shall all that gain the *victory of faith* be called to His right hand to sit down with Him, on *His* throne, when he comes in His glory, and “all the holy angels with Him.”†

22.—Each one, who is blessed with “the hearing ear,” is exhorted to attend to this last, as well as to the other of Christ’s epistles to the Churches. The subjects are important and profitable to all persons; the addresses are comprehensive, and for all ages. No one can read or properly listen, and prayerfully give heed to the word, or its rich doctrinal truth and clear practical application, without deriving some of that heavenly light of “correction and instruction in righteousness,” which the Holy Spirit specially imparts, “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”§ But this anointing grace is absolutely requisite before any can even bring their minds to believe the excellency of this Scripture, its reference to present times, or its adaptation to the edifying of the Churches.

It becomes a matter of vital consequence whether we are among the incredulous and careless in these

* The reign of the saints with Christ hereafter, upon the restored earth, is a fruitful subject of interest throughout the Revelation, and other Scriptures. See i. 6; ii. 26, 27; v. 10 xx. 6; also Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29, 30, &c. &c.

† Matt. xxv. 31—33. § 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

sacred matters, or among the earnest and zealous believers. It is too common for persons who are either busily engaged in the engrossing affairs of this life, or seemingly in the condition of the Laodiceans, who, "having need of nothing," being "rich and increased with goods," to pass by with hasty heedlessness, or treat with lukewarm indifference, subjects of the highest purport and sublimest moment, such as these; for want of that "hearing ear," which the Spirit of God alone can impart by His gentle dew-like influences, distilled into the unprejudiced mind.

May we obtain this blessed gift, above all others necessary even for appreciating and profiting by any part of Holy Writ, through the earnest prayer of faith in the name of Him with whom the Father is always well pleased. With this Divine Prompter and Teacher, opening the understanding and warming the inner soul, we shall not be found among the unillumined and lukewarm, insipid and offensive to Christ, prejudiced against prophetic truth and heedless of coming events. But we shall be ready to recognize "the voice of our Beloved," as He stands and knocks at the door of our hearts for entrance and acceptance, and hail Him with gladness as our best treasure; as "the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely;" the Jewel of the soul; the Friend of sinners; who clothes us with His righteousness, washes us in His blood, enlightens with His Spirit, enriches with His grace,

and promises to make us happy as kings and holy as priests, for ever with Him, when He comes in His kingdom.*

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,—
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
Light, riches, healing of the mind,
O, Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—of Thy free love,
The breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
Here for a season, then above,
O, Lamb of God, I come!”

[The next two chapters (iv. and v.) form a kind of preface, or preparatory vision, to that which properly begins the *prophetic* portion of the book, “the things which shall be hereafter.” See i. 19.]

* These epistles, dedicated by the great head of the Church to the Seven Churches of Asia, have been profitable to the faithful in all countries, and throughout all ages; encouraging the weak, sustaining the laborious, admonishing the careless, rousing the lukewarm, threatening the backslider, and promising to all who overcome, a heavenly and eternal reward. This promise runs through all the epistles, however diversified they may be in other respects, showing that the faithful members will not lose their Crown because of the errors or the crimes of the majority of the Church to which they may belong; nor will the careless, or the sinner, or the self-righteous, receive a blessing because of their connection with a pure and faithful Christian community. (Skeen’s “Unsealed Prophecy.”)

REV. IV. 1—11.

THE VISION OF HEAVEN OPENED.—THE THRONE,
AND THE KING UPON IT.—THE TWENTY-FOUR
ELDERS.—THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES.—THE
PRAISE AND GLORY.

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2.—And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4.—And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5.—And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thundings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6.—And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7.—And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. 8.—And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9.—And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10.—The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11.—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

1.—After the things previously recorded* in

* “μετα ταυτα,” after these things.

the two preceding chapters (ii. and iii.)—"the things seen" in the vision of the Royal Mediator and Ruler in the midst of the Churches, and "*the things then existing*" in the state of the seven principal Churches of Asia; the Apostle looks upward, as prompted by "the Spirit," which throughout the whole revelation influenced him; and, to his astonished gaze, an *opened door* appeared in the sky, or heaven above him. As a real vision, and not the fiction or result of an excited imagination, he was permitted to see beyond this vale of earth into the higher heavens, as through a wide-expanded door.* The first thing which attracted his notice, as he intently looked up, was the *trumpet-voice* of one of heaven's inhabitants† addressing him, just as one man would speak to another, saying, "*Come up hither,‡ and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*"

2.—He was "immediately" absorbed by the Spirit's powerful presence in a rapturous contemplation of the heavenly objects placed, as if in reality, before his mind. They appeared in as distinct a form and outline of resemblance and character as if he saw and heard, with his natural eye and ear, similar things transacting here on earth.§

* See Rev. xix. 11; and Ezek. i. 1,—"*The heavens were opened; and I saw visions of God.*"

† See Rev. i. 1, and xxii. 16. ‡ Rev. xi. 12.

§ It must be constantly borne in mind, throughout the Apocalypse, that the visions abound in pictures and symbols of realities which are given by the Spirit for the Church to interpret.

The first striking object represented to his eyes, in the vision of heaven opened, was a throne, fixed and exalted, set on a solid base, high and lighted up, for all to behold.* And there appeared One upon it, seated in royal dignity, splendour and glory, eclipsing all outline of form or figure, image or similitude.†

3.—The brightness which seemed to distinguish the presence of the Divine Monarch on His throne, was comparable to nothing but the lustre of the clear “jasper and the sardine stone;”‡ while, as if to modify the dazzling effulgence, “round about the throne,” appeared the beautiful circling form of the rainbow, and in it the prevailing colour of

* Jerem. xvii. 12:—“A glorious high throne from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary.” Both Isaiah (vi.) and Ezekiel (i.) had special visions of God’s throne in the heavens.

† Deut. iv. 12:—“Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.”

‡ It is not probable that John meant to describe the *colour* of the Divine appearance on the throne so much as the sparkling clear lustre surrounding it, being that of the most pure and sacred of precious stones. “Jasper” (“ישפֶּת—*Iasspit*”) is a polished and somewhat red-coloured stone. It is mentioned third in the fourth row of gems in the high priest’s breastplate: Exod. xxviii. 20. The light of the New Jerusalem seemed like a “jasper stone” (Rev. xxi. 11); the building of its wall was the same (v. 18); also, *the first* of its twelve foundations.

The “sardine stone” (“סַרְדִּים—*Sardion*”), is of ruby or blood-red colour. It was another of the gems on the breastplate of the high priest (Exod. xxviii. 17); and it is mentioned as composing the sixth foundation-stone of the heavenly city (Rev. xxi. 20).

the fair and soft green of the “emerald;” in sign of God’s everlasting covenant with fallen man and the restored earth, after the baptism in the flood of waters.

The rainbow* is one of the most beautiful and attractive objects in the phenomena of the heavens. Spanning the skies, in its perfect circular extent, from side to side, it is an apt emblem to us of the expansive embrace of Divine mercy as displayed towards mankind under the grand covenant of the redemption by Christ, and also of the *eternity* of God’s counsels and promises to the purified and restored. Its diversified colours, all derived from the reflection and refraction of the sun’s rays on falling drops of rain, may be said to pourtray the various graces which should adorn each believer’s character, as drawn from the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit of God† operating upon the heart amid

* Gen. ix. 11—17; Ezek. i. 28; Isa. liv. 8, 9; Rev. x. 1. Two stanzas of a poem on “The Rainbow,” supposed to be written by Mr. J. Watson, of Hackney, may not be out of place here:—

“Beautiful Bow! in mercy given,
Token of love from earth to heaven!
When thou art beaming bright and fair,
May I ever behold the promise there!
Beautiful Bow; a brighter one
Is shining round th’ Eternal Throne!
And when life’s little storm is o’er,
May I gaze on this Bow for evermore!”

† Gal. v. 22, 23. We may remember a verse in the “Ordination Hymn:”—

“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire;
Thou th’ anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy seven-fold gifts impart;
Thy sacred comfort from above,
Is Wisdom, Light, and Fire of Love!”

the changing scenes of calm and storm, cloud and sunshine, in the course of human life.

The "*emerald*"* hue in the rainbow round the throne marks the prevailing mild green in the rainbow of nature; and, also, as before hinted, it may tend to typify that verdant colour abounding in the vegetable world, soothing and agreeable to the eye, even as the tender mercy of God surrounds the terribleness of the grandeur of His justice, and qualifies its startling effect upon the human sight and imagination.

4.—There seemed to the apostle, in his vision, besides the *throne* and *One* seated on it and the *rainbow* encircling it above, the appearance of

* The "*Emerald*" ("נִפְתָּר—σμαραγδος") a precious stone of a beautiful and agreeable green colour. Pliny observes of it—"The sight of no colour is more pleasant; for we love to view even *green* fields and leaves, and are still more fond of looking at the *emerald*, because all other greens whatever are flat in comparison of this." It was the first of the second row on the high priest's breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 18), and it constitutes the fourth foundation of the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 19).

Gems are said to be emblematic of the purity, glory, and unsullied justice of the Divine Being. Also, they have been thought, with reference especially to the breastplate of the high priest, to have had some oracular meaning at certain times; and, probably, the various colours and qualities of the precious stones may have a mystic and typical application—as in the foundation pearls of the New Jerusalem—to various virtues and peculiarities of excellence in the characters of God's elect people.

twenty-four elders, or presbyters of Churches, sitting on twenty-four appropriated thrones, around the throne of the Supreme. They were represented as clothed in white, and having golden crowns on their heads. These elders, or presbyters, forming part of the courtly attendants upon the King, and attached to the inner temple and sanctuary of heaven above,* are doubtless representatives of *the Church triumphant in heaven*; of all those who shall have finished their course, and kept the faith, and for whom there is laid up a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give in the great day to all those who love His appearing;† of all those, too, who under the dimmer light of the old dispensation laid hold of “the promise,” and looked to the coming Seed of Abraham, believed in the (typical) blood of the Lamb, and lived and obtained a good report, and at length died in faith.‡

* There is reference, most likely, in these heavenly representations, to the tabernacle and temple service of the Jews. The throne points to the “mercy-seat,” and the twenty-four elders’ seats to the twenty-four chambers around the most holy place for the chiefs of the priesthood, according to the twenty-four courses or classes—(1 Chron. xxiv. 3—19). St. Peter alludes to the whole redeemed Church as a *royal priesthood* (1 Peter ii. 9). See, also, Ezek. viii. 17, where the presiding officer, or *high priest*, is the twenty-fifth included. So the four living creatures, winged, typify the cherubims over the mercy-seat (Exod. xxv. 18—22, and Heb. ix. 5).

† 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, also, Rev. iii. 4, 5.

‡ See Heb. xi. 39, 40. Though the advantages of saints

5.—The next thing which roused the attention of the prophet was the loud echoing sound, from about the *throne*, of mighty thunderings, with flashing lightnings, and loud voices. As when the law was given to Moses at mount Sinai,* the majesty of Jehovah was thus manifested; so is it here in the display of the Sovereign and Law-giver of the universe upon His throne, with the assembled princes of His regal, priestly, and legislative court around Him.† And, as in the temple-worship and service of Israel there was a *seven-branched golden candlestick*, with its seven lamps always burning before the mercy-seat, supplied with pure olive oil, for perpetual light; so, we observe, in the temple above, “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,” as symbols of the seven Spirits of God, or the seven-fold light and unction of the Holy Ghost.‡

6.—There was the resemblance of a molten *sea* of transparent *glass*, fronting the throne,§ and clear as crystal; without any mingling of impurity or

living, believing, and saved under the Christian dispensation may be said to be far greater, yet it does not follow that the “*crowns*” of those who lived under the more shadowy and typical dispensation, believed, repented, and were true to their faith in the promised “Lamb of God,” should be less bright and glorious.

* Exod. xix. 16. † See Ezek. i. 13—24, and Rev. viii. 5.

‡ See View of the above, page 19. Gen. xv. 17, and xvi. 18 Exod. xxxvii. 23; Zech. iv. 2, also Rev. i. 4.

§ Exod. xxx. 18—21; 1 Kings vii. 23—25.

disturbing element whatever.* Unlike the imperfect and often-agitated administration of earthly governments, the rule of the Most High is distinguished by the most complete order and regularity, purity and unruffled calm. Over the wide-spread, ocean-like expanse of His dominions, from the council-chamber of His infinite wisdom, issue forth His fiat and decrees, conveyed by His consummate angelic ministry, and executed with the invariable placidity of un murmuring peace and harmony, steadfastness and fidelity. This may also present to us another feature of the temple below, under the emblematic sanctity of the enshrined Deity in the holy temple above; for the molten sea, and brazen laver with water for purification of the priests, shadowed forth the *sanctification* necessary before approaching God.

Then, within the circle of those who appeared to encompass the Sovereign's high throne, were the figures of four other remarkable beings,† representatives and heads, as we believe, of the vast hierarchy of the heavens, in the four quarters of the universe, cherubim and seraphim, "principalities and powers

* In Rev. xv. 2, is mentioned a "sea of glass mingled with fire;" presenting a somewhat different idea from this—of spiritual calm within, but judgment and trial without.

† "ζῶα"—the original—should be rendered as above, and not beasts, (θηρία). The form here assumed was that of winged animals, but the meaning must characterize the highest created intelligences, as may be seen.



in heavenly places,”* but all taking the liveliest *interest in man's redemption*. Over the mercy-seat, in the Jewish temple and tabernacle, were the emblematic figures of the cherubims, with out-stretched wings, encircling and covering it; also, cherubims, with flaming sword, guarded the tree of life.† These, we may believe, were symbols below, like the “living creatures” above, of the “angels that excel in strength,” the superior archetypes of the heavenly host; the messengers of Jehovah, as “a flame of fire,” sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; strong, and skilled, and prompt in their various high offices and natures, to do from the heart the will of God their Father, Maker, and Governor. Of the quickest intelligence in perceiving what has been done, what should be done, and how it should be done, they are described as “*full of eyes before and behind*.”‡ They know, by assistance of the Most High, deriving all their knowledge, capacities, and powers of mind from Him, how the past has operated, and how the future should be administered. Unlike human minds, which even in their largest grasp,§ unaided by

* Ephes. iii. 10; Ps. ciii. 19, 20; and Heb. i. 14. Is it not a rapturous idea, and quite warranted by holy writ, that some of the highest orders of angelic beings are commissioned on earth in behalf of the redeemed? See Matt. xviii. 10, and Luke xv. 10. † Gen. iii. 24; Exod. xxv. 18–20; Ezek. x. 5–19.

‡ Ezek. i. 5–25, x. 8–18.

§ David and Solomon, in the Old Testament, and St. Paul, in

God, can only take in a very small portion, and judge superficially, of past transactions, and can very feebly calculate and discern things in the dim future; these lofty beings, “full of eyes,” can penetrate keenly *behind* them through the hidden reasons and motives, and remember facts and consequences of things; and far-seeing *before* them, apprehend at a glance what the right and best course is, and what things are likely to occur and be the result in time to come.*

7.—In the highest and heavenliest of God’s creatures endowed with the holy gift of reason, and even in those of lower, and brute and animal instinct, we find various properties, qualities, and peculiarities of disposition and character, differing widely from one another, and in some very important features. With regard, for instance, to some of the lower races of God’s creation, in our earth, there is “*the lion*,” of placid and noble dignity, and of a royal, vigorous and courageous bearing; ranging abroad as lord of the wild forest,

the New, may be said to have been possessed of the greatest power and grasp of intellect known in holy writ, and yet how lowly must they appear beside the shining ones of heaven!—See Ps. lxxiii. 22; Eccles. ii. 12—15; 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12; Phil. iii. 12, 13. The four hierarchies of heaven may be representatives of, or presidents over, the ecclesiastical, the political, the social, and the domestic orders on earth.

* The “*Eye*” is a well-known emblem of clear mental capacities; such as exact knowledge, correct judgment (Ps. xi. 4), consideration, prudence, memory, care, caution, &c.

roaring after the prey, and seeking it from God.* There is "*the bullock*," or "*ox*,"† remarkable for its patient toil in serving man, bearing the yoke on his willing neck, and enduring the labour of the fields with constancy and perseverance. Again, of the birds of the air, "*the eagle*," on his strong and outspread wings, and with stern piercing eye and gaze unabashed at the sun's rays, soars aloft into the skies, exploring the summits of the inaccessible mountain-crags in search and support of his eyrie, seeming to outstrip the stormy wind and the spacious firmament in his majestic upward flight.‡ *Man*, too, walking with head erect, and face of intelligence, in the midst of the animal creation, is as much elevated by reason (which enables him to raise his thoughts to contemplate God and His works) and distinguished above the highest of the irrational species, as the cherubim and seraphim, themselves, around the throne are raised above him, in their pure ethereal natures and immortal endowments.

The *first* class, or order, of these high denizens of the heavenly courts is represented, (in accommodation to human comprehension,) under the

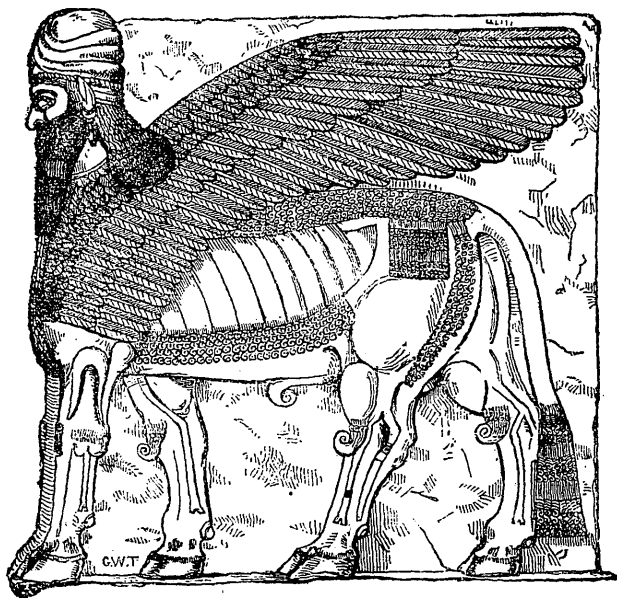
* Ps. civ. 21.

† The word "*μωσχος*," translated "*calf*," is used by the "Seventy" for almost all the names of animals of the *Ox* kind, without distinction of gender or age.

‡ The "*eagle*," is a scripture emblem of vigour, power, and rapidity of flight; of protecting care and support of its young. See Exod. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11, 12; Ps. lxxiii. 7; Isa. xl. 31.

hieroglyphic symbol of the “*lion*,” having such distinctive qualities, in the exercise of the Almighty Ruler’s behest, as placid and dignified bearing, courage, firmness, and strength for government, fortitude and magnanimity of spirit.*

The *second* class is shown to us under the likeness of the young and vigorous “*steer*” or



* The “*lion*,” in his emblematic character, as king of beasts and lord of the forest, represents dominion, authority, and government. Hence the application to Judah, Gen. xlix. 9. See, also, Amos iii. 8; Joel iii. 16; and Dan. vii. 4.

“*bullock*,” characterized by patience and energy, gentleness and gratitude, endurance and diligence.*

The *third*, as having “*the face of a man*,” gifted with superior eminence of form and beauty, and loftier faculties of intellectual grace, wisdom, and virtue, brightness of aspect and benevolence of disposition.

The *fourth*, and last, bears the similitude of “*the flying eagle*,” being known for their decision of purpose and will in fulfilling the commands of the Most High God, their soaring aspiration after highest attainments in the knowledge of God and His works, for tender care and lively affection, lofty and strong penetration of sight and understanding, and vigorous effort for defence and protection.

The object of these (animal) hieroglyphics, thus portrayed in the enthroned presence above, may be brought forward to represent to us models of what the redeemed saints below may resemble, in some measure, during their state of grace and probationary service here on earth; and which shall be perfected in the glorified state that is coming, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men.

8.—All of these symbolic living creatures are

* See Ancient Babylonish figure of winged Bull, with human face.—The strength, endurance, and usefulness of the *Ox* is well known, especially as employed in ancient times. Hence the worship of Apis, a young bullock, among the Egyptians, and its idol form in many nations. Exodus xxxii. 4; 1 Kings xii. 28, 29; also Prov. xiv. 4; and Isa. i. 3.

seen with six wings each, and all full of “eyes around and within.”* The wings of each one of the seraphim described by Isaiah are six in number:—

“With twain he covered his face,
With twain he covered his feet,
And with twain he did fly.”†

The “wings” signify the great promptitude with which the “principalities and powers” on high receive and execute the purposes and commands of the Heavenly King upon His throne, and the swift speed, like the velocity of instantaneous transference from sphere to sphere, with which they pass and repass on their high and holy errands. Yet, not all the wings are needed, or significant of promptness and celerity in flight. With two, we are informed by the inspired Isaiah, each covered “*his face*,” veiling, as it were, himself with becoming reverential awe and humility, in the immediate presence of the Divine Majesty: not presuming, with all his high endowments, and emblazoned honours, to look boldly or

* “Κυκλοθεν και εσωθεν,” or, around and within the throne.

† Isai. vi. 2. The Greeks represented their god Mercury, the messenger for the gods, with wings on different parts of the body down to the feet. The “wings,” generally represent, in scripture, great celerity of motion, as in Ps. xviii. 10, civ. 3, and Jerem. xlvi. 40. The appearance of the “four living creatures” in Ezekiel’s vision of the cherubim, with “wings” and face-resemblance, is not very unlike that which is represented here. See Ezek. i. 9, 10.

presumptuously, as if on an equality, upon the face of the Supreme. With two each covered "his feet," in token again of profound obedience, lowly reverence, and modest deportment; and with two each "*did fly*," and sped on his rapid course, with unwearied diligence and despatch, from heaven to earth, and from orb to orb, without hindrance or delay, as ever and anon each was summoned by the will of Omnipotence, on works of piety and charity, justice and mercy.* Their being "full of eyes," also, "around and within" the throne, as referred to also above (ver. 6), betokened their fulness of vision and completeness of perception; their constant vigilance and circumspection, watching for the first intimation of the Divine will; observant of the first movement of assent and nod of approval; catching, at a glance, the least glimmering of denial or displeasure, and beaming with light of Truth on every side to perceive and know what things they ought to do, and to have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.

The courts of the highest temple in heaven, like the courts of the holy temple on earth, are not without their fulness of loud-sounding praise. The worshippers are not silent spectators. The attendants there, who are privileged to approach the throne of grace, do not come merely to see or

* The highest Archangel feels it no dishonour to be humble as a dependant creature of God. What a lesson for man! See Job xxv. 4—6, also iv. 17—19, and Jude 9.

to hear. They unite their voices with one accord, expressing the devotion of their hearts in the outspoken language of the lips.*

The four “representative” living creatures, seen before the throne, are incessant in their songs of praise. Though some of these distinguished and incorporated hosts are employed, from time to time, on lofty commissions to distant worlds in all quarters, yet all their work is praise; and there are never wanting spirits to keep up, without intermission, the voice of far-echoing adoration,—“They rest not day nor night.”† They are never wearied in the delightful service. The occupation comes home to their souls. Every utterance strikes a chord of ecstasy in harmony with their whole being, every pulse of which beats full with adoring gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise to the Supreme Eternal Father and Ruler. They need not, like mortals, render any confession of sin, negligence, or ignorance; nor, indeed, can they offer up supplications for the supply of any want. Pure and unfallen beings, upright and happy in themselves, they have every thing they need;

* The example of the celestial worshippers might remind those who attend upon Divine worship below, that something more is expected than silent devotion. There should be the audible utterance of the voice with the heart, in prayer and praise.

† They require no rest either of voice, or in action, waiting, and service. They are constantly and unweariedly praising God, one way or other. “They also serve, who only stand and wait.”

only desiring deeper acquaintance with the way of God and the purposes of infinite wisdom, and, especially as to the plan of man's redemption.* The subject which is uppermost in their Divine song is the holiness, omnipotence, and eternity of the Triune Jehovah—

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Which was, and is, and is to come!”†

* When it is said, “*He charged His angels with folly*,” it must be understood, not in the sense of human folly, or ignorance, but as the want of that perfect knowledge and wisdom which belongs only to the Deity. Again, in the words, “*which things the angels desire to look into*” (viz., the wonders of redeeming grace towards fallen man), we have it clearly revealed, that the highest orders of angelic beings have still scope and room enough before them to occupy their high intellectual powers, and *that*, perchance, to all infinity and eternity. See Job iv. 18, and xi. 7—9; 1 Pet. i. 12.

† Isa. vi. 3. This ascription, called “*Trisagion*,” is found beautifully transferred to the “*Te Deum* :”—

“To Thee all angels cry aloud,
The heavens, and all the powers therein;
To Thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory!”

As, also, in the sublime Eucharistic hymns,—

“For Thou only art holy!
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
Art most high in the Glory of God the Father!”—

“Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the

9.—Nor are the angelic beings alone, in their adoring and exalted worship and praise before the most high and ever-living God. The crowned, redeemed saints of earth we see represented here, as well as the holy, seraphic “ancients” of heaven. Their happiness is one, their worship is one, their God is one. A perfect unity prevails among the celestial choirs, of all ages, orders, and degrees. One may differ from another, as one star excels another in brightness. But all is sweet accord, without a jar of jealousy. One may take precedence of another in worship; from priority of birth and existence, or superiority of power and privilege; yet all belong to one universal Church, one vast congregation, one family and household of God, without the least taint of division, or the slightest whisper of dissent. All are “of one heart and of one soul,” in the highest possible sense; as it was declared of the Church on earth in her earliest, purest, and most spiritual days.* All the “four-and-twenty elders,” among the “first-fruits unto God and the Lamb,” unite in spirit, with all the angelic powers, and in responsive ascription of “glory, and honour, and

company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying,—

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!
Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High!”

thanks to Him that sat on the throne," the all-bountiful, the ever-living, self-existing Jehovah.

10.—In lowliest prostration, as deriving all their place and portion in the celestial mansions, their kingly and priestly dignity and felicity, from the free grace and goodness of their loving and merciful God, in releasing them from sin and death, they "fall down" before the King of heaven and Lord of life, "casting their crowns before His throne," and saying,

11.—"Thou art worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory, and honour, and power!
For Thou hast created all things,
And for Thy pleasure* they are and were created."

They join, "with all the company of heaven," in the holiest temple, and before the throne of the Eternal, in lauding and magnifying His glorious name, as the Universal Creator, and as the *alone and independently* "*worthy*" of all worship, honour, and praise; since He only is the Source and Author of all creature-life and happiness of every kind and degree, from the least to the greatest, from first to last, "visible and invisible;" whether they be "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;"† inferior orders of being or superior; in heaven or earth; above, beneath, around,

* "δια το θελημα σου," "*Through Thy will and pleasure.*"

† Coloss. i. 16, 17.

below; in every planet, star, or luminary of the spangled skies—none are self-existent; none are self-made; none live by chance or fortuitous provision. All are His work; the creation of His sovereign word and will. All depend upon and “live in Him.”* They were formed by Him, and for His good pleasure, who “spake, and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast.”†

May we bless and praise God that we have such an insight given us, through the “open door,” into the highest heavens! Let us contemplate the sublime vision with that awe and gratitude which the scene is calculated to inspire! O that we may, in spirit, unite with the hallowed congregation on high in worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness!

“O come, let us worship, and fall down,
And kneel before the Lord our Maker!
For He is the Lord our God!
And we are the people of His pasture, and the
sheep of His hand.”‡

Let us also rejoice in the fact of the constant *ministry of angels* engaged in behalf of the Church of God on earth! These holy beings, endowed with various gifts and capacities, we know, “do always behold the face of the Father which is in heaven,”§ and come forth from the Divine presence, as commissioned to minister to the heirs

* Acts xvii. 28.

† Ps. xxxiii. 9; Gen. i. 3.

‡ Ps. xcv. 7, 8.

§ Matt. xviii. 10.

of salvation ; ever doing His good pleasure, and hearkening promptly to the voice of His word.*

And should we not look upward with faith, and behold, as here revealed to us, the cheering, peaceful emblem of the *covenant Rainbow* encircling the glorious high throne, as an encouragement to us to come boldly, through the One Great Mediator, to the mercy-seat of the Most High, and to the fountain of grace, now unveiled and freely opened to all, “that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”†

O that we may thus daily and unweariedly worship before the throne of our Almighty Creator, and Eternal Saviour and Preserver, in spirit and in truth, with all the glorified and angelic choir and redeemed elders of the Church triumphant ; and singing the song of our imperfect praises now in this house of our pilgrimage, we shall surely be called hereafter to prolong it, in perfection, and perpetuate it, in holier strains than even angels can utter, in the holy temple-courts, and actual presence of our God,—

“Where congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths never end !”

* Ps. ciii. 20.

† Heb. iv. 16.

REV. V. 1—14.

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK.—THE “LAMB” ALONE
CAN OPEN IT.—THE LIVING CREATURES AND
ELDERS PRAISE HIM.—THE HEAVENLY HOSTS
UNITE.—AND ALL CREATION.

AND I saw in the right hand of him
that sat on the throne a book
written within and on the backside, sealed
with seven seals. 2.—And I saw a strong
angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who
is worthy to open the book, and to loose
the seals thereof? 3.—And no man in
heaven, nor in earth, neither under the
earth, was able to open the book, neither
to look thereon. 4.—And I wept much,
because no man was found worthy to open
and to read the book, neither to look
thereon. 5.—And one of the elders saith
unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of
the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath
prevailed to open the book, and to loose
the seven seals thereof. 6.—And I beheld,
and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of
the four beasts, and in the midst of the
elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain,
having seven horns and seven eyes, which
are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into

all the earth. 7.—And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8.—And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9.—And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10.—And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11.—And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12.—Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13.—And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in

them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14.—And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

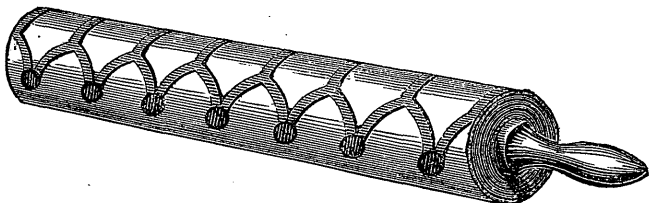
1.—The same general scene which is related in the former chapter is evidently continued here. The throne in the opened heavens, the four living creatures with the elders doing homage before the Supreme, are still present and form objects of deep interest. The place of the vision is the same; but some new appearances come out to view in the scenic representation. All is now bearing upon the preparatory grand development to the mind of the apostle and to the Church, of "*the things that shall be hereafter,*" *the prophetic roll of the revealed future.*

This roll, volume, or book,* is seen at the right hand† of the King Supreme, the Heavenly

* "βιβλίον," (lit.) a *small* roll, or book; *small*, as comprising much in small compass. The writings, at this time, were usually on parchment, rolled round a cylindrical wand, generally written on one side, but sometimes on both. See Ezek. ii. 9, 10. See View of the probable form of the Roll.

† "ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιάν," does not so much signify *in* the right hand, as *upon* it; resting on it, so that no one could be said to put it in His hand, its entire dependence being on Him.

Father, as He sits on the throne. The writing is in hieroglyphic symbols, both within and on the outside; and the whole appears of seven parts or divisions, each sealed down and secured with its own distinct seal.



2.—As soon as John had closely observed this, an angel of superior strength and dignity of office stands forward and proclaims, at the command of the Omnipotent,* with a voice loud enough for the representatives of all creation to hear, in these terms, ‘Let any one come forward, whoever will, who thinks himself worthy to *open the book and to loose the seals thereof!*’ Immediately there was a pause, and silence on all sides. No created being was found in heaven above or in the earth beneath, in any region, on high or below, who dared to accept the solemn challenge, or deem himself “worthy” to break a seal of the sacred roll of completed prophecy† ready to be revealed to man, or to open the volume and look therein.

* However “strong” the angel may be represented, we must bear in mind that he does nothing of his own accord, or independent of the will of the Almighty.

† The seven seals to the roll imply *completion*, and it will be found reaching onward to *the end of time*.

4.—John himself was greatly affected at the sight. He wept much,* and felt much grieved to think that so strikingly interesting a volume of the Divine and holy Scripture, concerning the future of the Church, should remain a *sealed book*, for want of some one worthy to open, look on it, and read it.

5.—While he was melted in tears, under great distress of spirit at this disappointment, one of the twenty-four elders (heads of the royal priesthood of redeemed saints before the throne) seemed to come to Him, and say, "*Weep not!*" for, behold, there is One, well known as the lion-king of the tribe of Judah,† also as "the Root," or origin and Lord "of David," who has power over all things in heaven and earth, and has "pre-vailed," according to the Father's good pleasure, to open the book and to loose its seven seals.

This announcement of the name and title of One familiar to "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and of His ability and worthiness, as the King of Israel and the Eternal Son of the Father, to make known the full contents of the seven-sealed

* The word in Greek is not "εδάκρυον," the milder term, but "εκλαιον," the more intense.

† See Rev. xxii. 16; Gen. xlix. 9 and 10; Ps. xi. 9; also Numb. xxiv. 9,

"Judah is a Lion's whelp,
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up!
He stooped down, he couched as a Lion,
And as an old lion, who shall stir him up?"

volume, must have had a marvellous effect upon the apostle's mind to arouse him from his despondent frame, and cheer him with a sudden burst of hope and joy. So, not unfrequently, in the Christian's life, when despondency has flung its dark and clammy wings around the tender breast, and all seems like midnight-gloom and the very jaws of destruction ; some kind friend, like an angel of mercy, appears on the scene speaking peace to the troubled spirit ; an opening in the clouds shows the fresh rays of the "Morning Star" of hope, and soon the daylight appears, and the rising sunbeams of joy follow and dawn upon the restored soul. The widow of Nain was met weeping bitterly as they bore her only son to the tomb ; but her tears were soon dried, and her sorrow turned into joy by Jesus, when he that was dead stood up, began to speak, and was delivered alive and well to his mother.* The disciples were sad at parting with their Master, and finding their fond hopes and expectations blighted by His cruel and untimely decease accomplished at Jerusalem ; but when they heard that He was risen, and saw Him suddenly appear amongst them, showing them His nailed hands and pierced side, and listened to His voice and words of love, "*Peace be unto you !*" their heart could refrain no longer from being glad, and their joy no man could take from them.†

6.—As John looks on towards the throne, with

* Luke vii. 12.

† John xvi. 22, and xx. 19, 20.

delight and wonder, expecting what should next transpire after the gladdening and reassuring announcement by the elder, he beholds in the midst, and among the four living creatures and twenty-four elders, the remarkable figure of a *Lamb*, with signs of blood, as if He had been recently slain.* There were “*seven horns*” projecting from the head, which John knew to be the emblems of power and complete dominion; and he had “*seven eyes*,” expressive of the perfection of wisdom and understanding, and the manifold gifts of the Spirit,† which so largely rested upon Christ when He was fulfilling the work of redeeming love and ministerial power upon earth.

7.—He alone, as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” One in nature and attribute with the Father and the Holy Spirit, had the right to take the closed book from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, and break the seals to reveal the eternal purposes of heaven and disclose the future to His “chosen out of the world.”‡

8.—He had no sooner received the book from the Father’s hand, than the four living creatures and

* The symbol of “*the Lamb*” would be well known to John, who records the baptist’s repeated cry in the wilderness, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John i. 29, 36). The significance of this symbol here is, *Christ in His humanity*, as the *sacrifice* for our sins.

† Rev. i. 4.

‡ John xv. 15, 16, 19.

the four and twenty elders—the cherubim and priests of the heavenly courts—fall down in lowly reverence before His feet, the elders having* each “harps” in their hands in preparation for His praise, and “golden vials full of odours,” signifying the sweet incense-offering of effectual prayers. The desire of the celestial choirs is satisfied, and the fervent wishes of the redeemed gratified.

9, 10.—These latter, at once, make ready the strings of the harp, and attune them to a “*new song*,” the song of salvation in honour of the Lamb, saying,

“Thou art worthy to take the book,

And to open the seals thereof,

For Thou wast slain!†

And hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood,

Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests;

And we shall reign on the earth!”‡

* The “having,” “*εχοντες*,” must apply to, and agree with, the word “elders,” and not “*ζωα*.” The special harping of praise is commenced by the redeemed representative “priests,” then continued harmoniously by the higher order of angels, and then taken up in grand chorus by the “innumerable multitude” of angelic beings. If the *higher order of angels*, specially commissioned to minister the will of the Supreme on earth, join in the redemption-praise to the Lamb (ver. 9, 10), it can be only done to show their lively interest and associate sympathy in man’s redemption.

† The aorist (past) tense “*εσφαγης*,” “thou wast slain,” is here used. The Romish dogma of the *continued* sacrifice and offering up of Christ, in the bread and wine of *the mass*, is thoroughly *unscriptural*.

‡ See Rev. i. 6, and xx. 5.

11.—In quick succession upon this, and as if to complete the united harmonies of heaven, in the *temple-courts*,* John beholds, and hears, “the voice of “*many angels*” in the space surrounding the throne, and “round about the living creatures and elders”—numbering myriads of myriads—swelling loudly their celestial voices in symphonious praise, and “*Gloria in excelsis*” to the Lamb,—

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain !

To receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength,
And Honour, and Glory, and Blessing !”†

13.—The voice of universal adoration quickly follows, and is heard by John, from the whole extent of God’s creation—in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in the water under the earth‡

* We have repeated analogies, from the Apocalypse, in the arrangements of the *temple above* with the order of the *Jewish temple*. Here, for instance (iv. v.), we observe (1) *the Holy of Holies*, with the mercy-seat and overshadowing cherubic figures ; (2) *the Sanctuary*, or holy place for the twenty-four orders of the priesthood ; (3) *the Court of the Children of Israel* ; and (4), the surrounding *Court of the Gentile-Proselytes*. See, also, note and Figure, xi. 1, 2.

† Seven-fold honours due to the Son of God for seven-fold gifts, and to none other.

‡ Every being and thing (sentient, or not, rational or irrational, animate or inanimate), may be figuratively described as uniting in God’s universal praise, when all subserve some great beneficial purpose in creation or in redemption, in providence or in grace. See Ps. cxlviii., and the beautiful ancient hymn upon it, called, “*Benedicite omnia Opera* ;” also, Philip. ii. 10, 11 ; Rom. viii. 21, 22.

—as if bowing to the sceptre of the Supreme enthroned King of Heaven, and to the name of Jesus, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and ascribing—

“Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power,
Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne,
And unto the Lamb for ever and ever !”*

14.—This is immediately responded to, as if in the great congregation of heart-worshippers in the Church below, by the four representative “living creatures” above, saying “AMEN !” To which the twenty-four elders of the redeemed bow their assent, in devout reverential homage before the throne, while they “worship Him who liveth for ever and ever !”

What exalted thoughts this vision of the throne, the Lamb, the angelic hierarchy, the priestly nobility and royalty, and the countless worshipping angels, suggest to us ! What a sublime opening of the heavenly temple, and introduction to the prophecy following, have we in these reiterated songs of praise and universal adoration of

* This sublime combined praise seems in anticipation of the “fulness of time,” when the universal dominion shall be the Lamb’s, throughout the whole visible creation connected with our earth ; when,

“Jesus shall reign, where’er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run !
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more !”

the worthiness of the Lamb, in taking and opening the sealed book for the instruction and consolation of the people of God, to the end of time! We seem, as it were, like Paul,* caught up into the “third heaven,” to see and hear unspeakable things, scarcely possible to conceive or utter.

May the effect upon us be to stir up within us an ardent desire to be included in the number of “the followers of the Lamb!” May we be privileged to join, in heart and spirit, now in the ascription of praise to the Eternal Trinity, and hereafter, as inheritors of the glorious kingdom of Christ, in “the restitution of all things.”

“To Him who lov’d the souls of men,
And wash’d us in His blood;
To royal honours rais’d our head,
And made us ‘Priests to God’†—

To Him let every tongue be praise,
And every heart be love!
All grateful honours paid on earth,
And nobler songs above!

‘I am the First, and I the Last;
Time centres all in Me!
The Almighty God, Who was, and is,
And evermore shall be!’ ”

* 2 Cor. xii. 1—4. † See Rev. i. 5, 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5—9.

REV. VI. 1-6.

OPENING OF THE SEALS IN ORDER.—THE WHITE HORSE—THE RED—THE BLACK.

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2.—And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer. 3.—And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4.—And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereupon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5.—And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6.—And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

1.—“*The Lamb*” had the sealed book in His hand, as received from the Father, and seemed only waiting till the last sound and act of the general adoration had died away, that He might proceed to break the seals, and unclothe the interesting volume of the future.

As soon as the *first seal* is broken, John observed carefully, and immediately there is heard something like the noise of thunder as if to arouse universal attention, and betoken events about to be disclosed of deep and stirring importance; and as if a voice proceeded from *one of the living creatures** near the throne, calling him to “Come and see.”

2.—He went near as directed; and, lo! he saw on the book, now partly unrolled, the figure of a “*white horse*.” A rider sat on him armed with a bow. A crown, or chaplet of victory, was placed upon His head, and he seemed to be going forth triumphantly—

“CONQUERING, AND TO CONQUER.”

We are thus introduced to the first part of the prophetic apocalyptic roll. Brief are the words, but striking and full of meaning are the objects. The “*first*” of the four living creatures, having the emblematic likeness of the “lion,” the royal ranger of the forests, is appropriately selected to draw the prophet’s attention to Christ, “the Lion

* See Rev. iv. 7.

of the tribe of Judah"—"The Prince of the kings of the earth," in His royal and victorious character, going forth, and gradually subduing, and then ruling the nations by His "Gospel of the kingdom." He is as *the Rider on the white horse*, of successful conquest by His holy word; prospering till all things be put under His feet; and bearing the same name on the completion of His conquests as at the beginning.* The horse on which He is now seen to ride is very different from that on which in the days of His fleshly humiliation on earth, he rode into Jerusalem. Then, it was the humble "colt, the foal of an ass," on which He condescended to make His entry into the city †—the hosannas, which arose from the people, prefiguring, in accordance with ancient prophecy,‡ the early peaceful progress of His truth against Jewish prejudices. Now, in the onward spread of the Gospel after His ascension to the heavens, and the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit at and after Pentecost,§ He appears as the Mighty and Successful Warrior;||

* See Rev. xix. 11—14. "White" (Gr. λευκος, Lat. *candidus*,) is commonly the emblem-colour of the Church and saints of Christ. It is the distinctive characteristic of Christian royalty, purity, and victory. See Rev. i. 14, ii. 17, iii. 4, vii. 9, xiv. 14, xix. 8, and xx. 11. † Matt. xxi. 5. ‡ Zech. ix. 9, 10.

§ See Acts ii; Ps. lxxviii. 18; Ephes. iv. 8.

|| The "*Horse*," is an emblem of *war* (Job xxxix. 19—25), of *conquest* (Zech. x. 3), of *fleetness* (Joel ii. 4), of *strength* and *safety* (Ps. cxlvii. 10).

advancing and prevailing, and determined to prevail unto the end in defiance of the opposing enemy. So the prophets of the Old Testament foretold, and the history of the primitive Christian Church confirms :—

“ Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty,
With Thy glory and Thy majesty !
And in Thy majesty ride prosperously,
Because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ;
And Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things !
Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies,
Whereby the people fall under Thee ! ” *

And,

“ Thou didst ride upon Thy horses,
Thy chariots of salvation ;
Thy bow was made quite naked. ” †

The fulfilment of the emblematic representations made of Christ in His victorious course, by the early preaching of the word through His apostles and ministers and the Spirit sent down from on high, is clear and palpable. The weapons were “ *not carnal*, ” but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. ‡

Up to the period of John’s imprisonment in

* Ps. xlv. 3—6.

† Habak. iii. 8, 9, also Zech. ix. 13, 14.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 5.

Patmos (A.D. 95), great had been the success of the glorious Gospel. It had begun in Judea, like the "grain of mustard seed," or the "little leaven," cast into the bushel of meal. But it grew on, and increased. Till the great Sacrifice for sin was accomplished on the cross, few comparatively were they who boldly embraced the truth, and confessed Christ before men.* But, as soon as the ransom was fully paid, the kingdom freely opened, and the promised gift of the Holy Ghost copiously showered down, then the "arrows" of conviction smote many a believing heart, and thousands in a day were added to the Church, "of such as should be saved." Great was the company of preachers, when the Lord gave the word;† great was the multitude, in the chief cities of Asia, of men and women who believed "and were added to the Lord."‡ So that, even before Paul was taken away, and before he had "finished his course," with the prospect of a noble martyr's crown, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ, it might truly be said—

"Their sound is gone out into all lands,
And their words into the ends of the world."§

Thus, we may take the opening of the first seal

* John i. 10, 11, xvi. 7—11, and Isa. liii. 1. † Ps. lxxviii. 11.

‡ Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, v. 14, vi. 7, xii. 24, xix. 18—20, Coloss. i. 6, 23.

§ Ps. xix. 4, Rom. x. 18. It was a strong attestation to the early power and prevalence of the Gospel when it was stated by its enemies, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."—Acts xvii. 6.

as an immediate continuation of the Church history from St. John's time, under a figure, and we have the fact supported by the best authorities.*

From the seven flourishing Churches in Asia Minor, addressed by the Spirit in the preceding chapters (ii. and iii.), we see how far and wide the religion of Christ had spread and established itself, and, in many cases, on the ruins of heathenism. The younger Pliny's letter to Trajan from his proprietorship in Bithynia (A.D. 111) is well-known. The progress of Christianity in that part of the empire (he states) astonished and alarmed him. The heathen temples were almost deserted; the sellers of victims for the sacrifices complained that they had no purchasers; persons of either sex, and of all ages and ranks—even Roman citizens—had embraced the new opinions.†

* Gibbon, the great historian of Rome, who begins his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" just about the supposed opening of the first seal (A.D. 96), bears evidence throughout, in spite of his infidel principles, to the truth of the Apocalyptic symbols. The most prosperous condition of the empire, and, with it, the general peace and advancement of the Church, are shown to extend from the death of Domitian through the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines, A.D. 96 to A.D. 180, which is the historical period (we believe) chiefly embraced under the first seal. He states (vol. i. p. 47), "*If a man were called to fix a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus.*"

† See Dr. Burton's "History of the Christian Church." In

Well might it be said, as it is reported of one of the fathers of the second century, "*We are but of yesterday, yet we have filled the world.*" So truly may these symbols be chosen by the Spirit of God, in announcing the first prophetic scene at the opening of the sealed book by "the Lamb,"—the Royal Rider on the *White* horse, advancing with the crown, or chaplet of victory on his brow, granted to Him by the Father, over the nations; the "*Bow*,"* with its piercing arrows of conviction,—and the progress of His ceaseless and resistless course, from people to people onward, till all nations call Him blessed—

"CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER."†

3.—The "*Second Seal*" opens under very different aspects. The prophet is called by the *second* another place, he observes, "There is abundant evidence that, during the whole of the second century, Christianity was advancing rapidly. Justin Martyr spoke of the religion of Christ having reached the remotest regions; and Bardesanes, who wrote a few years later, and was himself a native of Mesopotamia, mentioned by name the Persians, the Medes, the Parthians, and the Bactrians, as having already received the Gospel.

* The "*Bow*" ("τοξον"), as also the "*Crown*," or chaplet ("στεφανος"), have been taken by Elliott, and others, as emblems of the Roman imperial power under Nerva, who was a native of Crete (famed for archery), and because the emperors at this time were wreathed with the royal "*στεφανος*," and not the "*διαδημα*." But, surely, the emblems apply quite closely and properly to Christ and the Church, rather than to the Roman secular world—as seen above.

† See Ps. ii. 8, xxii. 27, 28; Dan. vii. 13, 14, &c.

of the living creatures, having the likeness of the calf or young and patient ox, to come forward and see.

4.—He saw now, the figure of a “*red horse*” passing on the symbolic scenery of the sacred roll. To him who sat thereon was given “a great sword,” and power therewith to take peace from the earth (Roman), and cause great civil contention and bloodshed.

This seems rightly to be interpreted* as signifying the great *persecutions* which the Church of Christ had to endure in her progress, growth, and increasing success in company with her Ruler and Head, from the malice and envy of the unbelieving and warring world.

Our Lord, from the first, warned His disciples that, in following Him, they must expect much opposition and persecution. “If the world hate you,” said He, “ye know that it hated Me, before it hated you:”† “I came,” [*i. e.*, one effect of His coming, through the perverseness of man, would be], “not to send peace, but a sword.”‡ His mission from above was peace on earth; His Gospel

* It is the view taken by the earliest Church writers, as enumerated and quoted by Wordsworth (now Bishop of Lincoln) in his interesting “Notes on the Revelation.” Those again, who ascribe the seals, in whole or in part, to circumstances of mere *secular* transactions in the Roman empire, seem certainly to have missed the mark. *Christ and the Church must surely be on the foreground, throughout the whole depicted Scenes.*

† John xv. 18—20. ‡ Matt. x. 34—36.

was announced by the “multitude of the heavenly hosts,” hymning their praises by night in the hearing of the shepherds of Bethlehem, “On earth peace, good will towards men.”* But the hostility of the human heart was set against the simple purity of the “glad tidings of great joy.” The prejudice and bigotry of the Jew and the idolatry and pride of the Greek were both equally roused into deadly opposition to the doctrines of the Cross of Christ.† The earnest zeal of the first preachers of the Gospel, and the resistless spirit with which they spake, convincing thousands, breaking up synagogues, and threatening idol-temples and the gains of their interested priests and votaries, soon led to acts of mob-violence, and brought the innocent propagators of Christ’s word, and labourers for the salvation of souls, into danger of their lives, before kings and rulers.‡ Very early in the Acts of the Apostles we see signs of the war-horse of persecution coming forth, stained “*red*” with blood, and its rider armed with the “*great sword*” to destroy, and take peace from the Church on the earth. Peter, and the other apostles, were soon imprisoned, and liberated only by a miracle.§ Stephen was stoned to death.|| Herod “stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church,” and, first, “killed James, the brother of John, with the sword,” and

* Luke ii. 14. † 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

‡ Ps. ii. 1—3; Acts iv. 24—26. § Acts v. 18—20.

|| Acts vii. 59, 60.

proceeded to do the same to Peter, because he saw “it pleased the Jews.”* So Paul, after being nearly torn to pieces in a popular tumult, was imprisoned, arraigned before Felix and king Agrippa; and at last, sent a prisoner to Rome, where he suffered martyrdom under the tyrannical Nero (about A.D. 66).

Several persecutions† of Christians are recorded in the history of the Church within the first three centuries. These seem to bear out the characteristics of the “*Second Seal*”—the “*Horse*,” red as fire or blood;‡ the *rider*, the great adversary of Christ, armed with the (Roman) “*sword*,” and the direction given to His cause, to “*take peace from the earth*.” Amid these times there are some honoured names of Christian worthies who suffered for Christ and were found firm and faithful unto death, which deserve to be here mentioned. All the apostles, it is said, suffered death by fire or sword, by wild beasts or crucifixion, except John,

* Acts xii. 1—3.

† The ten general persecutions of the Church are stated as under—

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Nero. | 6. Maximinus. |
| 2. Domitian. | 7. Decius. |
| 3. Trajan. | 8. Valerian. |
| 4. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. | 9. Aurelian. |
| 5. Septimus Severus. | 10. Diocletian. |

From about A.D. 64 to A.D. 305.

‡ Many suffered by fire as well as by sword. They were put into sacks of tar and pitch, and made to light up the streets of Rome at night, like living torches.

who was banished—being a martyr *in will*, if not *in deed*.*

We have mention of "*Antipas*," a faithful martyr of the Church of Pergamos, slain among them for the truth's sake.† We hear of *Ignatius*, the disciple of St. John, and the eminent bishop of the Church of Antioch, made a sport of by the Romans at their public games, by being thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheatre. He describes his state, just before his cruel death, in one of his epistles, "Why have I given myself up to death, to the fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? Yea, verily, when we are near the sword, we are near to God; when we are in the midst of wild beasts, we are in the hand of God. I endure all things in the name of Christ, who strengthens me to suffer with Him." *Justin Martyr* (about A.D. 161—5), who had the boldness to present a first and second learned "Apology; or, Defence of Christianity," to the emperor, was, with many other companions, scourged and afterwards beheaded, because they refused to take part in sacrifices to the gods, or to swear by the emperor's name. Severe as were the sufferings of confessors and martyrs (during the

* It is recorded by Tertullian that John was sent bound to Rome by the emperor's command (Domitian), and being accused as an eminent assertor of atheism and impiety, he was cast into a cauldron of oil set on fire; but, whether by miracle, as was believed, or by the merey of his persecutors, he was taken out unhurt, and then banished to Patmos. See i. 9.

† Rev. ii. 13.

persecuting period),* they sink comparatively into the shade while we read of the aged, venerable, and apostolical *Polycarp*, Bishop of Smyrna, before referred to (c. ii.), being burnt to death in the amphitheatre, A.D. 167.

It remains only to notice, under this seal, that the "second" of the living creatures, which had the likeness of the calf, or young ox, is that which directs John's attention to the newly-opened scene. This would seem to signify, that the figure on the prophetic roll portended toil and sacrifice,† the patient labour and suffering of the Church, and the many devoted victims which would be offered up to God amid the fierce persecutions following. The unbelief and barbarity of Pagans and Jews, set against the preaching of the doctrines of the Cross, soon kindled the glowing flames on the altar, and whetted the sword of Satanic vengeance. With all their vehemence and blood-thirstiness, they could not destroy the truth of Christ. "The blood of the martyrs" only served to attest the vitality of the faith; and the result was larger growth, and more abundant increase in the fruitfulness of the seed of the Church.‡

* *Confessors* were they who *confessed* the faith without being called to forfeit their lives; *martyrs*, they who did both.

† See Rev. iv. 9.

‡ Tertullian states, in his "Apology" for the Christians to their heathen persecutors, "Your cruelty draws others to us. The more we are mown down by you, the more our harvest grows. "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*"

5.—The “*Third Seal*” is broken by the same Divine hand, and another of the “living creatures” calls the apostle to “come and see.” He now beholds the figure of a “black horse,” gloomy as night; and the rider upon him was one bearing “balances” in his hand, not of equity, but of “deceit.”* As soon as he observed this, an unusual voice seemed to come from the midst of the “four living ones,”† and to be addressed to the rider on the black horse,

6.—“A chœnix of wheat for a penny!—

And three chœnices of barley for a penny!

And take care thou injure not the oil and the wine.”

These *famine prices*,‡ of ordinary articles for the food and nourishment of human life, represent (in prophetic language) a dearth of a spiritual kind, and a deterioration and scarcity of the true bread, the staff of life. The rider, therefore, may be

* Hosca xi. 7; Micah vi. 9—11; also, Jerem. v. 30, 31. The “ζυγος,” or “balance,” is generally emblematic of justice; but, taken in connection with the *black* horse and the hostile attitude of the rider, it will signify the balance of a false prophet. Also, it may intimate scarcity (as Ezek. iv. 10, 16), from the scrupulous weighing out in *scales* that which is commonly sold by *measure*.

† See Ezek. x. 5. Perhaps from “the *Four*,” as affecting, the four quarters of the empire.

‡ The Greek measure “chœnix” is reckoned about the *eighth* of a bushel of wheat, which latter was commonly to be purchased for a denarius (or “penny”), the soldier’s daily pay and labourer’s wages. The *barley* was dear in proportion, eight

considered as representing an enemy of Christ, having the show of religious truth and equity *in his hand*, but *black* and deceitful in his intention and advance against the true Church of God. So, Satan, having failed to uproot the Church by the deadly assaults of the persecuting "*great sword*" (as in the former seal) which continued during the first *three* centuries ; next, by his subtle craft, endeavours to choke the good seed of the word by the "*tares*"* of *heresies* sown in the midst, and cause a famine, not so much of bread and barley, as of hearing and feeding upon the genuine bread and wine of life eternal.†

The prevalent "heresies" in the Church, therefore, seem to form the leading idea presented under this figure in the "*Third Seal*." The danger of doing mischief is always increased by the measure of *plausibility* and *truth* mixed up with the introduction of error. Hence the "balances," working fair and equal in the hand, but being really the balances of deceit and iniquity, show the dark and hidden things of dishonesty which usually accompany the progress of the erroneous doctrines of false prophets and teachers of the people.‡

times at least above the regular price in those days. Many seasons of great actual scarcity and famine occurred in the empire, affecting all quarters and conditions of society. But the spiritual and religious sense, as above given, seems to demand the first and most prominent interpretation of the figure.

* Matt. xiii. 25—39. † John vi. 31—35; also, Amos viii. 11.

‡ An open enemy in the field is far less to be dreaded than a treacherous friend in the house (Matt. x. 36). Judas, the traitor

Christianity no sooner began to be propagated than, as our Lord Himself had warned, "false prophets," wolves in sheep's clothing, made inroads upon the flock, and caused havoc of the Church by sowing discord among brethren, corrupting the truth, and putting antichristian error in its place.*

The *Gnostic* heresy, deriving its title from laying claim to a more pure and accurate *knowledge of God*,† and of the origin of good and evil, began to spread at an early period in the Church. *Simon Magus*, the apostate,‡ mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as the "enemy of all righteousness and child of the devil," though baptised by Philip and professedly a "child of God," is said to have first introduced these corrupt (*Gnostic*) heresies, seducing many from the faith, and prejudicing, to a large extent by his numerous followers, the name of Christ among the heathen.§

and disciple, delivering up his Divine master to his enemies "with a kiss," appears in a far more odious, hostile, and criminal light, even than Pilate condemning Jesus under the pressure of circumstances, or the soldiers who, with bold mockery, plaited a crown of thorns and pressed it upon the sacred brow of Jesus, and then smote him daringly and upbraidingly with the palm of their hands. See Ps. lv. 12—14; Matt. xxvii. 24—29. * Matt. vii. 15, 16; xxiv. 4, 5, 24.

† From the Greek "*γνωσις*," knowledge.

‡ Acts xiii. 10.

§ The Gnostic philosophy, as it was called, is supposed to have had its rise in Persia and Egypt, and thence to have been brought into Greece and Lesser Asia. Among the most

Of the other *heretical* sects which troubled the peace of the Christian community to the largest extent in the first three or four centuries, that of *Arius*, presbyter of Alexandria in the beginning of the *fourth* century (to which the third seal seems to reach), was the most disastrous and afflictive. In the words of a writer of ecclesiastical history in the fifth century,* it may suffice to state on this heresy—"Then,"—after the conversion of the empire under Constantine to Christianity—"the malignant and envious demon, the foe of the world, could not brook this change from storm to peace, and he stirred up *heresies*, in order to submerge the ship of the Church. Wherefore he no more excited *open assaults against God our Saviour*; but, having found certain men, graced with the

dangerous of their doctrines, when mixed with Christianity, was the denial that Christ had a material body, believing that all matter was essentially evil (there being one deity over the evil and another over the good), and hence they virtually explained away the proper truth of the Incarnation and the Atonement, as well as the real humanity and Divinity of Christ. The sect called "*Doetæ*," from "*δοκεω*" ("*I seem*"), were a branch of Gnostics, calling the body of Christ a seeming body, or "*phantom*." Other divisions of Gnostics were the *Carpocratians*, *Cerinthians*, and *Ebionites*. The Incarnation and the Atonement, the human and Divine nature of Christ, seem to have been the great subjects in which controversy and false doctrine prevailed in the Church from the earliest times. See Gal ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 1—3; 1 John ii. 18—23, &c.

* Theodoret's "*Ecclesiastical History*," Book i. 2.

Christian name, but slaves of ambition and vain-glory, he chose them as instruments of his machinations. Thus he brought men back to their old error; not, indeed, by leading them to adore the creature, but by endeavouring to degrade the Creator of the world to the rank of creature. There was a certain presbyter, at that time, of the Church of Alexandria, *Arius*. The adversary of the truth suborned him, and by his means made confusion in the Church, and tempted him to oppose the *apostolic doctrine* of Alexander, the bishop of that Church"—that is, *the true and orthodox doctrine of the Trinity*.

The "*Third Seal*," therefore, may be understood as disclosing the advance of *heresies* in the Church.* And, as these generally proceed from an excessive and prurient use of man's reason, in opposition to the plain word of God's pure revelation, the *third* living creature, having "*the face of a man*," is designated as drawing John's attention to the unfolded view.

But, as "man," with all his boasted exercise of rational intelligence, and all his abuse of the gift of God, cannot succeed in overthrowing the truth;

* The interpretation, under this seal, is supported in the "Notes on Revelation," by the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Wordsworth). Lord Bacon, in his "Essay on Controversies," observes (as if commenting on this and the preceding Seal), "When the *fiery trial of persecution* ceaseth, then succeedeth another trial; which, as it were, by *contrary blasts of doctrine*, doth sift and winnow men's faith."

so, from the midst of the *four living ones*, cherubim and seraphim, types of the highest intelligences of heaven and all creation, there comes a voice, as from the Son of God Himself, "the brightness of the Father's glory," ever in the midst of the redeemed and chosen, affixing an authoritative limit to the deteriorating injury of His word and doctrine, the spiritual bread and support of life. He who holds the false *balances* of unsound doctrine is restrained in his course on the black horse, from making the famine of the word, and the distress, perplexity, and loss of souls thereby, complete. In His compassion for his suffering people, and His determination to keep His *grace* and *truth*, planted and dispensed by the Holy Spirit among men, still alive on the earth. He commands,

"SEE THAT THOU HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE."*

We should ever depend upon the Spirit's grace and wisdom from above, to teach us Divine truth, and establish us immoveably in the faith. "*The mind of the Spirit*," if we seek and pray for it, will give us a right understanding in all the great

* "*Oil*," from the olive tree, is a scriptural emblem of sanctification and illumination, by the Holy Spirit's gracious influences on man's understanding and heart (Ps. xlv. 7, 11; xxxiii. 2; Matt. xxv. 4; 1 John ii., 20, 27); and *Wine*, from the fruit of the vine, is the symbol of joy and gladness, especially as arising to the true believer from the Atonement by Christ's blood; and one of the outward signs in the Lord's Supper (Isai. xxv. 6; Ps. civ. 15; Matt. xxv. 4; 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27).

essential doctrines of our holy religion. Divergences, to the right hand or to the left, from the solid basis of the creeds of Scriptural Protestantism, are to be deprecated and dreaded. The unequal “*balances*” of bigotry and prejudice, as well as of rationalism and scepticism, must be carefully avoided. A refined philosophy, the offspring of intellectual pride, opposing fancied science to the simple and plain testimony of the revealed word, can never lead a soul to Christ for salvation. The arrogancy of being wiser than God caused the fall from heaven of one, supposed to have been of the highest order of intelligences. The same presumption was the leading cause that conduced to the sin of our first parents, and the loss of their terrestrial paradise. And it is very much the same fault which, in every age, has made men of learning *heresiarchs*, and drawn thousands into the subtle meshes of their conceits, the dupes and victims of those who “would be wise” above that which is written,

“*Darkening counsel with words without knowledge.*”*

Let us rather determine and strive to act with St. Paul, when he says, “We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”†

O, may the “*oil*” of heavenly grace ever abide

* Job xxxviii. 2.

† 2 Cor. ii. 17, “*καπηλευοντες*” (lit.), *taverning the word of God*, adulterating it with human notions and fancies; as tavern-

upon our hearts, keeping us strong in faith and firm in the love of Christ; and preserving us, in times of much restless agitation of the waves of heresies and uncertain doctrines, from making “shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience.” Thus may the “*wine*,” from the true and wholesome fruit of the Living Vine,* ever gladden and strengthen us, amid a famine of the word and scarcity of sound teaching, and the unsettled turmoil of human opinions; that, drinking into the Spirit of our Lord and Master, and having our Christian graces regularly sustained by *the communion of His precious body and blood*,* we may stand, in the evil day, “*strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!*”†

“Immoveable our hope remains,
 Within the veil our anchor lies!
 JESUS, who wash’d us from our stains,
 Shall bear us safely to the skies!

Strong in His strength, we boldly say,
 For us IMMANUEL shed His blood!
 Who, then, shall tear our shield away?
 Or part us from ‘*the love of God*’?‡

Founded on Christ, secure we stand,
 Seal’d with His Spirit’s inward seal;
 We soon shall gain the promis’d land,
 Triumphant o’er the powers of hell!”

keepers were in the habit of doing with wine, so false teachers treated God’s truth, to the injury of the public and the enriching and aggrandising of themselves.

* John xv. 1. † 1 Cor. x. 16. ‡ Rom. viii. 35—39.

REV. VI. 7—17.

THE FOURTH SEAL, THE PALE HORSE;—THE
FIFTH SEAL, THE SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR.
—THE SIXTH SEAL, THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE.

7.—And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8.—And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. 9.—And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10.—And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11.—And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be

fulfilled. 12.—And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13.—And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14.—And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15.—And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16.—And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17.—For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

7.—The “*Fourth Seal*” opens with the most gloomy significance that could possibly be represented. The imagery depicts some of the most disastrous and distressing circumstances that could befall the Church or the world.

8.—The apostle is summoned to behold, (1) A “*pale*” and livid-coloured horse; (2) the rider bearing the awful name of “*Death*;” (3) *Hades*, (or the grave, or hell) follows, personified,* as if with open jaws, close by the side of Death, ready to engulph his prey; these having power entrusted, or permitted them, to execute God’s “*four sore judgments*” upon a considerable portion† of the Roman earth by the sword of war, by famine and hunger, by pestilential disease, and by the ravages of wild beasts.

Viewing this seal as we have done the preceding, chiefly from a religious point of view, and in connexion with the Church, we are led to the conclusion, that however the above judgments may have been, as we believe, *literally* fulfilled in many instances,‡ they have their origin and chief illus-

* *Hades*, in the Heb. “שְׁאוֹל,” and Greek “Ἅδης,” translated hell (Ps. xvi. 10, Acts ii. 17—31), is, properly, the *invisible state* of the departed.—(1) The *grave*, as regards the body till the resurrection-day, and (2) the world of spirits—“*Paradise*,” otherwise called “*Abraham’s bosom*,” (Luke xvi. 22), for the “*spirits of the just*,” and the hell, or “*place of torment*,” for the lost. See also, Job x. 21, 22; Isai. v. 14; Luke xvi. 23.

† Some MSS. read “*four parts*,” instead of *fourth part*. It is sufficient to know that a vast number of human beings suffered, as testified by the historian (Gibbon) below; the judgments being general in all parts of the empire—the numbers perishing being probably intended, rather than the parts or portions visited.

‡ For about fifty years, reaching to the end of the third century, from A.D. 248, we learn that the Roman empire was ravaged by frequent warlike incursions of Goths, Germans,

tration in the soul-destroying *idolatry, saint-worship, and apostasy*, which overspread the Church, like deadly plagues, from an early period, and for a long continuance.

It cannot be that a roll of prophecy like the Apocalypse, introduced with grandeur and solemnity of visions, such as no where else can be found in the whole range of Scripture, should predict events merely bearing upon the state of the secular empire of Rome, without primary and paramount application to the condition and interest of the Church of Christ. This fact has been overlooked by writers commenting on the "seals," and some other portions; and hence much light has been overlooked as to the *spiritual bearing and meaning* of each vision. The view of the subjacent earth, from the mountain-height of this prophecy, must be held throughout to be quite secondary in

Gauls, and Persians; while famine and pestilence depopulated many of the chief towns and cities, so as to leave room for the wild beasts to multiply and complete the devastation. Terrible deaths by persecutions also afflicted the Church, about the same time that multitudes of people were swept away by the above judgments. "100,000 persons (says Mr. Gibbon) are reported to have been massacred in the siege and sack of one city—Philippolis. From A.D. 250 to 265, a plague raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family in the Roman empire. In Rome, during the same time, 5,000 persons died daily, and many towns that had escaped the barbarians were entirely depopulated. We may suspect that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species."—(See Decl. vol. i. 169, &c.)

importance to the view of *the destinies of the Church of God.*

Idolatry, practical unbelief, and apostasy from the true, sole, and spiritual worship of Jehovah, have been the “*great transgressions,*” in the professing people of the Lord of every age, which have called forth His most severe threatenings and signal punishments.*

The prophet *Ezekiel* is especially clear, in harmony with the subject of this “*fourth seal,*” in showing that God’s “*four sore judgments*”—the very same as mentioned here, “the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence,” are called down upon a people professing godliness, but hypocritically serving the Lord, “*setting up idols in their hearts, and putting the stumbling-block of iniquity before the face.*”† So grievous is this trespass considered in God’s sight, that He declares by His prophet—though there be a faithful remnant in the land; though such good men as “Noah,” “Daniel,” and “Job,” were in it,—they could not save either son or daughter from being cut off; they could only be delivered *themselves* from the effects of the general desolation.

Soon after the influence of the great effusion of the Spirit ceased, and the last of the apostolic

* See Levit. xxvi. 14—29; Ezek. xiv. 12—21, and throughout the prophets—as well as the denunciations by our Lord in the Gospel.—Matt. xxiii. 34—37, &c.

† Ezek. xiv. 4, &c.

fathers slept in Jesus, great declension in godliness and spirituality, in steadfastness and apostolicity of doctrine began to prevail in the Church. There was a succession of believers, in the remnant of saved followers of Christ, in whom the true Zion was *comforted*;^{*} but these had too much cause to deplore (1) the general laxity in life and doctrine; (2) the traitorous renunciation of the faith by many, in order to escape death; (3) the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in worship to the corruption of the simplicity of Christ's Gospel; (4) image and saint adoration; and (5), the consequent depreciation of such essential articles of the faith as the one atonement, mediatorship, and propitiation for sins made in the person and by the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church may be said to have occupied about *one quarter of the world*,[†] after the empire became nominally Christian, under Constantine, at the beginning of the fourth century. The chief predictions under this seal, therefore, cannot date earlier than that important era. The elevation of the Church soon afterwards into the high places

* Ezek. xiv. 22, 23.

† "*The fourth part*" may be meant by this: see also a remarkable vision (Zech. vi. 1—8); four differently coloured horses going forth, each into one of the four quarters of the earth—They are called (verse 5) "*four spirits of the heavens*," going forth "from standing before the Lord of all the earth;"—shewing, clearly, that a *spiritual* meaning is to be attached to such visions.

of the world, and the prevalence of idolatry and hypocrisy, were chief causes which may have led to the sins drawing down from heaven the infliction of the punishments that followed.* The sufferings of the Christian community with the worldly or secular empire, were very grievous, as is well attested, under the various desolating irruptions and conquests by the Goths (A.D. 410), under the Huns (A.D. 452), and the Vandals (A.D. 455), together with the terrible ravages of *Mohammedanism* (beginning A.D. 622),† when the devastated Church and empire seemed to reach the climax (as under this seal) of GHASTLY DEATH.‡

We notice, in conclusion, that the *fourth* of the

* *Moral and spiritual woes*, in consequence of idolatry and apostasy, are well characterised by the solemn ghastly images of Death—"the sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts." The striking figure of the *latter* (θνητα), is used no less than *thirty-seven times* in the Apocalypse with reference always to some form of monstrous and *idolatrous aggression* upon God's Church, in the Romish earth, secular or ecclesiastic. See Rev. xi. 7, xiii. 1—18, xvii. 3—17, xix. 19, 20, xx. 4—10.

† It is worthy of notice, shewing the *verbal accuracy* of every part of the prophetic visions, that here, where the scourge comes firecely from a foreign enemy's hand, that the word for "*sword*" is not that commonly used to designate the Roman weapon, "μαχαίρα," but "ρομφαία," properly the Thracian and barbarian scymitar.

‡ The subject of the seven seals, as containing *the whole of the Revelation of the future made to John*, must necessarily be supposed to comprise *the whole period of the events connected with Christ's Church unto the end*; it is therefore unreasonable to confine the events of the fourth seal, as some do, within so brief a period as that between A.D. 248 and A.D. 268 or 304.

“*living creatures*” before the throne, who calls John’s attention to the present subject, has the figure and characteristics of “*the flying Eagle.*” This may be intended to show, that, in relation to the true portion of the flock of Christ in the midst of general sufferings of an extremely painful, dangerous, and destructive kind—when Death, in hideous forms, should stalk abroad, night and day, as if with wide-extended maw, eager to devour truth, and take away life and peace from the very soul of the Church—there should be a keen-sighted, overshadowing providential care and support, exercised as if by the highest order of angelic ministers, over the children of God and heirs of salvation. With this Divinely-commissioned help and comfort, from Christ himself, they would have nothing really to fear! The Lord of angels and saints would stand by them and succour them! They might defy death, having no “*sting*” for them whose victory is ensured in Christ! They might devoutly look up to Him, and, triumphantly, though not boastfully nor presumptuously, feel and say with the Psalmist, under similar trials,—

“He is my refuge, and my fortress;

My God! in Him will I trust:—

Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,

And from the noisome pestilence!

He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust;

His truth shall be thy shield and buckler!”*

* Compare Isa. xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. The

9.—The “*Fifth Seal*” is opened by the “*Lamb*,” but under different attendant circumstances from the preceding *four*. Those had revealed, according to the interpretation pursued in this portion of the Apocalypse ; (1) *the victories* of the Gospel, its early and rapid advance under the banner of Christ, and by the sword of the Spirit ; (2) *the bloody persecutions* raised against its progress under the pagan emperors for nearly three centuries ; (3) *the heresies and false teaching* which oppressed the Church, like dearth and penury arising from fiscal exactions ; and, (4) *idolatry, unbelief, and apostasy*, drawing down upon the Church in the earth something analagous to the “four sore judgments” of Almighty God upon faithless and idolatrous Israel.

Now, under the figurative “*Altar*” of burnt-

two following stanzas of a spirited hymn fully accord with the Christian’s triumph in Christ over death :—

“Break off your fears, ye saints, and tell
How high our Great Deliverer reigns !
Sing how He spoiled the hosts of Hell,
And led the monster, Death, in chains !

Say, Live for ever, Wondrous King,
Born to redeem, and strong to save !
Then ask the monster, ‘Where’s thy sting ?’
And, ‘Where’s thy victory,’ boastful grave ?”

Also, Ps. xci.—appropriately headed, in our Bible,—

The happiness and security of the godly.

offering (amid the temple-scenery above),* where sacrifices for sins were wont to be made, are beheld by John a multitude of “souls, or disembodied spirits in the shadowy form of men; who had been put to death, as *martyrs*, on account of their testimony to the truth of Christ, and for the word of God, which they held steadfastly and unflinchingly in the face of their enemies.

10.—They are heard calling, as it were, for a speedy vindication of Divine justice on the heads of those who had daringly violated the truth and honour of God in the person of His servants, with such words as these:—“*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*” This is not the cry of *revenge*, for such is not tolerated by the Gospel of Christ.† But, as the voice of Abel’s blood,

* The Brazen Altar of *Burnt-offering*, as will be seen from the *Sketch of the Temple-Courts*, occupied a place near the front of the entrance of the Sanctuary, or “Tabernacle of the Congregation.” Exod. iv. 7.; Levit. xxvii. 1—8.

† The *spirit of revenge*, or a *vindictive feeling* for the punishment and injury of an enemy, which was considered a virtue and a duty by the heathen, was *never sanctioned* by the law of Christ. The sermon on the Mount (Matt. v., &c.) shews this throughout. Also, our Lord’s act of *praying for those who were crucifying Him*—“*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*” (Luke xxiii. 34.) See also, Deut. xxxii. 35, and Rom. xii. 19—21. *The vengeance which belongs to God*, and which it is lawful to appeal to, is the rightful vindication of His justice, truth, and honour. “Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him? I tell you, that He shall avenge them speedily.” (Luke xviii. 8, 9.)

shed by the hand of his murderous and unbelieving brother, is said to have cried unto the Lord, "from the ground" on which it was poured;* so from the (Roman) earth, where the innocent blood of thousands of God's children was poured, as that of lambs beside the altar of the Church,† there seems to arise a voice from the many slain, reminding God of their slaughter, and appealing to Him for the speedy execution of justice, to the praise of His name, and the deliverance of the oppressed.

The emblematic figures of this Fifth Seal are, by the very general agreement of writers, considered to represent the *Era of Martyrs* in the Christian Church. The period embraced may be reckoned as beginning almost from the proto-martyr Stephen, advancing throughout the general persecutions under Nero and to Domitian, and onward to Decius and Diocletian;‡ and, also, pre-

* Gen. iv. 10.

† The blood of the sacrifice was ordered to be *set apart as life poured out*, and sprinkled all round the altar upon which the victim was offered up, and its flesh consumed. (Levit. i. 5, iii. 2, and vii. 2.) So Christ "poured out his soul unto death" for us on the cross. (Isai. liii. 12.) *In the blood is the life.* (Gen. ix. 4; Levit. xvii. 11.)

‡ See under Third Seal—till Constantine became the protector of the Christian Church, about A.D. 313, and the ten years' deadly onslaught upon the Church by Diocletian terminated, there was no settled peace or security to Christians, in any part of the empire, except at short intervals. And, afterwards, we know, persecutions again arose from apostate emperors, and

figuring (it may be) the martyrs of other times, to the latest ages of the Church. Great numbers of all classes and ages suffered. Apostles, bishops, presbyters, deacons—rich and poor, noble and ignoble, men and women, the grey-headed father and tender children—added their names to the great “*cloud of witnesses*” under the Old Testament, “*of whom the world was not worthy.*”* “They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; they were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted (to give up their faith); were slain with the sword.” They were “counted as sheep for the slaughter;” yet, “in all these things they were more than conquerors through Him that loved them.”† They feared not the faces of men. They feared God, and overcame death; death, in any form, had no terror for them, whose bright hope was built on Christ, the Lord of Life. The martyr’s distinguished crown of glory would be theirs at the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ. Therefore, even in their rest with Him in paradise, their wistful cry is—“*Lord, how long?*”

11.—In proof of the acceptance of their united appeal to the Most High, and of their complete individual *justification* before God and angels, and before brethren and fellow-men on earth, it is

with the rise of the Papacy; so that large numbers were added (verse 10) to those who may be supposed to cry, at this period, from under the altar for the “Avenger of blood.”

* Heb. xi. 38, and xii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 37.

stated, that "*white robes** were given to every one of them." This appears like an additional assurance to the Church here on earth, of the "*perfect*" safety and consummate foretaste and consciousness† of peace and happiness which the spirits of the just enjoy above, and to be completely manifested and multiplied in the kingdom of Christ upon earth, when they shall wake from the dead in the likeness of their Saviour, descend together with Him, and partake in a highly honoured degree, of His reigning glory,§ and be for ever "satisfied with it."‡

The time will not be long delayed, before this glorious advent and reign shall be accomplished. They must rest "*a little while*." The number of the *slain for the testimony of Jesus*, and of the elect of God, must be complete before the manifestation of the sons of God can take place. For this, "the

* See Rev. iii. 5, vii. 9, xiv. 13; Heb. xi. 40, xii. 23; Ephes. v. 22. The venerable Bede observes, in writing upon this (fifth) seal,—“Those souls, which offered themselves a living sacrifice to God, pray eternally for His coming to judgment, not from any vindictive feeling against their enemies, but in a spirit of zeal and love for God’s glory and justice. So in that prayer, wherein Christ teaches us to forgive our enemies, we are also taught to say, “*Thy kingdom come*.” See p. 166.

† The consciousness, and not sleep, of the disembodied spirit, may be inferred under this seal. Also, "*white robes*" being "*given*," shows that justification and salvation are gifts of God and not merited by our works.

‡ Ps. xvii. 15. § Rev. vii. 13, 14, xix. 14, xx. 4.

whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, together until now!* The “little while” might be, then, a “thousand years,” or more, in the mind of Infinite Omniscience—

“As yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”†

Yet, now, surely, in this nineteenth century of the Church, and even this hastening on towards the close, we may say,

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.‡”

12.—On the opening of the “*Sixth Seal*,” greater surprise and astonishment than before seem to seize the mind and rivet the attention of the apostle. The scene is changed from the higher heaven and the altar court of the temple above,§ to the lower superincumbent sky, and the atmosphere round the Roman earth. He sees, as it were, the upheaving of a “*great earthquake*.”|| “*The sun*,” on one side, is obscured in the firmament, as in the darkness of total eclipse, and as though a black mantle, or “*sackcloth of hair*” were flung over his disc. “*The moon*,” on the other side, has lost her pale silvery shining and looks like “*blood*.”

* Rom. viii. 22, 23. † Ps. xc. 4. ‡ Rom. xiii. 12.

§ See Rev. vi. 9, “*Fourth Seal*.”

|| The shaking of the earth by natural causes from beneath, such as fire and gaseous elements, is metaphorically used to, describe the shaking or disturbing of nations by great political convulsions, or by the agitating effect of new and great events. See Isa. xiii. 9—13; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Hag. ii. 7; Rev. xi. 13. and xvi. 17, 18.

13.—“*The stars*,” also, scattered over the blue heavens, seem precipitated to the earth, just as easily and thickly as “unripe figs”* are seen to fall to the ground, when the trees are shaken by a tempestuous wind.

14.—Thus the surrounding (atmospheric) “*heaven*” looks in a state of transmutation, as when a scroll of parchment is being wrapped and folded together, or like an old changed garment, done with, and laid aside,† while mountain and plain, island and sea-bound coast, are convulsed and seem “moved out of their places.”

15.—The *inhabitants of the earth*, from the highest to the lowest, the strongest and the weakest—great kings and mighty captains, counsellors and commanders, the rich and noble, as well as the poor and mean, the slave and the free—all seem to be hurrying to hide themselves, as if smitten with universal alarm, to dens and rocks, in mountains and caves of the earth;

16.—Calling aloud, as if to the mountains and rocks,

“*Fall on us! and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne,*

17.—*And from the wrath of the Lamb!*”——

* The “untimely,” or unripe figs, are what were called *winter-figs* (“*ολυθους*”); they grew under the leaves, seldom came to maturity, and were easily shaken off by the wind. This latter forms the point in the comparison.

† See Ps. cii. 25, 26; Heb. i. 12.

as though “the *great day of His wrath*” were actually come, when none would “*be able to stand.*”*

A “*great earthquake*,” in prophetic language, generally signifies some great revolutionary change in human society.† How much in parallelism with the subjects of this “*sixth seal*” are the striking predictions by our Lord, in what is called *the prophecy on the mount*; in fact, this vision of the Apocalypse cannot be better explained than by a reference to those remarkable chapters (Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi.) which contain these predictions in language full of the imagery here used. We have, for instance, (1) the *mighty social and general convulsion*, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places; (2) the sun and moon darkened, stars falling,‡ and the heavens shaken; (3) distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; (4) the symbol of tender branches of the “*fig tree*” (casting her untimely-winter figs), as a sign that the summer of a new and brighter season is nigh at hand.

* Mal. iii. 2; Luke xxi. 25, 26. † See note to v. 12.

‡ *Sun, moon, and stars*, are prophetic images of those in high places, such as kings, rulers, princes, and persons of high office and distinction. See Gen. xxxvii. 9; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8, &c.

Our Lord, in these prophecies, it is agreed, had two great events in view. According to the *two-fold question* of the disciples, to which the whole prophecy forms an answer, (1) the circumstances connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and its magnificent temple, with the consequent uprooting of the old Jewish institutions, which took place under Titus, A.D. 70; (2) His own second personal advent, and the vast changes attendant and consequent upon it at the end of the world, or *age*.* To both of these great subjects the graphic figures of the prophecy refer throughout.

This “seal” presents imagery corresponding, and very similar in the events, applying to (1) *The great revolution*, political and religious, when mighty imperial powers, kings, and rulers, such as Maxentius, Maximin, Galerius, Licinius, and their proud warriors and counsellors, as stars darkened and falling, or like mountains shaking and rocks rending—were smitten down, one after another, like “*unripe figs*” by the fierce winter storm, with the sudden blast of conquest, before Constantine and his forces, carrying the

* Matt. xxiv. 3.

† “*End of the world*”—not the end of the actual existence of this earth, and the things transacting here, but the end, “*του αἰῶνος*”—of the age, or present dispensation of the Gospel under which we live, till the second coming of Christ. This distinction should be carefully kept in mind throughout the prophecies.

cross,* for the first time as the emblem of salvation and victory—who felt and acknowledged “*the wrath of the Lamb*,” for the Lord God of the Christians



fought for the Christians;† and (2) *the still more mighty commotion and change in earthly empires,*

* See view of the “Labarum,” or royal standard of the Cross. It is credibly recorded by Eusebius, the historian of the time, that Constantine, when advancing against his pagan adversary Maxentius, and while dissatisfied with *Polytheism*, prayed to God to teach him the true religion; that he and the army in their march saw, at mid-day, vividly figured in the air or sky, *the sign of a Cross*, with this Latin inscription on it, “*In hoc vince!*” (“Conquer by this!”). After which prodigy, as it was considered, the Cross with the device, or monogram of Christ, was made the “standard” of battle and of victory. (Euseb. lib. i. 22).—Life of Constantine.

† See Josh. x. 14, 43. “*The wrath of the Lamb*” is a remark-

kingdoms and people, when the *great earthquake*,* of all others the climax, shall shake all nations, and “*the Desire of all*” shall come, and “the whole earth shall be filled with His glory,”† when the wicked and all enemies of the Lord shall hide themselves, if possible, from His presence, and shall be *as chaff* of the threshing floor, dispersed before the wind, or *as stubble* is trodden down in the field, or consumed by the fire,‡ when “*the wise*” shall inherit the glory, and shine as “the brightness of the firmament,” and as “the stars, for ever and ever !”§

Amid all the changes of the world, and wild commotions in earthly empires, the people of God

able expression, signifying (1) the extreme dismay and confusion of Constantine’s enemies when they beheld *the Standard of the Cross of Christ*, the despised Lamb of God, uplifted against them successfully in battle; and (2) because “*the day of vengeance*” must be the more terrible to all who despised and rejected “the acceptable year of the Lord.” Is. lxi. 2; Heb. ii. 3.

* See Rev. xvi. 17, 18, when the *seventh Vial* is begun to be poured out.

† Ps. lxxii. throughout, also Is. ii. 10—22; Joel ii. 28—31; Hosea x. 8; Acts ii. 19, 20; Luke xxiii. 29—31, and Rev. ix. 6.

‡ See Ps. i. 4, 5; Is. xxv. 6—10; Mal. iv. 1, 2.

§ Dan. xii. 1—3; Matt. xiii. 37—43. It is thought that, not only the great and general consternation upon the destruction of Constantine’s pagan opponents and his embracing the Christian faith as the religion in future of the empire, may be symbolized under this seal; but, also, there may be included by anticipation (1) *the great Reformation* of the sixteenth century, (2) *the great French Revolution* at the close

should rest fully assured of the safety of the Church, and keep the blessed hope of Christ's *Coming to reign* constantly in view. The more we see of party-strifes, deviations from "the faith once delivered to the saints," and wayward fondness for novel forms of doctrine and worship; the more we experience of the troubles of the world, and the vicissitudes of things temporal, and mark from time to time in our days the *fall of dynasties* long established, the fears of coming wars, and general alarm and distrust among the nations; so much the more ought we to determine, in God's strength, to cleave closely to "*the old paths*"* taught by the infallible word and promises of the Gospel; resolved to forbear from trusting in an arm of flesh, from building upon the sandy foundation of a nominal faith or human system or visible head, and to drink more and more deeply into the Spirit

of the eighteenth century, and (3) *the complete and final doom of the Popedom*, shortly before (4) *the glorious Millennial Kingdom*. Each of the defeated emperors or "kings," who threatened to extirpate Christianity, seems to have died a very miserable death. The dominions of Maximin were visited with famine and pestilence, and he himself was smitten with sores (like Herod of old, Acts xii. 23), and died in great agony. So, also, Galerius. Maxentius was drowned by the breaking of a bridge over the Tiber. And Diocletian, under whom were the *ten years* fierce persecution (A.D. 303 to 313), died worn out with grief and vexation. [Constantine openly declared himself in favour of Christianity A.D. 316.]

* Jer. vi. 16.

of Christ the Rock ; being more and more firmly rooted and grounded *in love to Him* the only Infallible and Unchanging Lord, *whose coming Kingdom can never be moved !**

“There is a holy time,
That comes with shadows of the darkened days,
With wintry winds that their wild voices raise,
As with a funeral chime !

It comes to weary hearts,
Beneath the burden of the past years bending,
To bring the promise of the joy unending,
And peace that ne'er departs !—

Shall it not quickly come ?
Jesus, Thy Church, with earthly griefs oppress'd,
Waits, ever watching for the peaceful rest
That is in Thine Own HOME !

And till that HOME we see,
Its visioned glory Faith beholds afar,
A light to guide us, like Thine Advent Star,
To Heaven's reality !”

* Heb. xii. 28.

REV. VII. 1—8.

THE RESTRAINING OF THE WINDS.—THE SEAL-
ING OF THE 144,000.—THE TRIBES SEALED.—
THE NUMBERS IN EACH TRIBE.

AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2.—And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3.—Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4.—And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* 5.—Of the tribe of Juda *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Reuben *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Gad *were sealed twelve thousand.* 6.—Of the tribe of Aser *were*

sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand. 7.—Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. 8.—Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

1.—Between the subject of the *Sixth Seal* and the opening of "*the Seventh*" and last, there is a kind of pause in the turbulent course of human events, over the four quarters of the Roman empire, signified by "four angels standing on the four corners," and holding, or restraining, "*the four winds*" from hurting *the earth* — sea-coast, or trees.

2.—In the season of comparative tranquillity which ensued upon the recognition of Christianity as the religion of the empire, and with the deadly blow dealt to the pagan deities and superstitions, —during the greater part of the fourth century— the Church is called, in the person of John, its representative, to see the "first fruits" of the

great conquest, drawn out from the mass of professing Christians now promiscuously added, and to be known and distinguished by a mark, or “seal” as the *true spiritual “Israel of God,”* on the forehead.*

An Angel is seen of a superior character, and of commanding presence, ascending like the day-spring from the “*East*,”† the bearer of the seal, and, with authoritative voice, directing the four angels, saying,

3.—“*Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,
Till we have sealed the servants of our God in their
foreheads.*”

* See Rom. ii. 28, 29; 1 Cor. x. 18. The “forehead” (also noted Rev. xxii. 4), the most conspicuous and characteristic part of the human body; the seat, say the fathers, of *boldness and constancy*, for good or for evil (Jer. iii. 3; Ezek. iii. 7—9); so, Antichrist, imitated this by a mark of his own on his votaries (Rev. xiii. 16; xiv. 9).

The *distinction* to be drawn between the true and the false, the genuine and the spurious, the nominal and the real portion of the visible Church, under the type of spiritual (or sealed) Israel, as discernible from Israel “after the flesh,” or mere lineal descendants of Abraham, seems the great object of the *Sealing Vision*. It has nothing to do with literal Jew or Gentile, but with *Christians in heart*, or *Christians by profession*, whether Jew or Gentile.

† “*Ανατολη*,” the Greek word for “East,” or “day-spring,” is used in Luke i. 78, and applied to Christ. The scene here, as usual, being symbolical, we need not stop to argue whether this angel, “*from the East*,” represents Christ or not. It is sufficient to know that he bears all the *insignia* of one endued with power from on high.

While the herds of aggressive and barbarous invaders on the borders of the empire are being withheld, through the interposing power and mercy of God, from disturbing the newly-augmented Church; and while crowds of converts are flocking into it, in great measure because of national excitement and imperial patronage, we are called by the great Heart-Searcher to contemplate, for our profit, a scene which depicts (as in a *tableau vivant*), not only the *large accession* to the faith, but the *grand distinction* to be drawn, between *true* and *false*, *living* and *dead* members of Christ's mystical body. Hence, the *Sealing Vision* before us presents these great objects of interest, for the consolation and edification of the Church in every age, (1) that God has the storms of this world's troubles completely under His control; (2) that he has an *invisible Church within the visible community*;* and (3), that the "*called, chosen, and faithful*"†—which is the character and title of those who belong to the *inner circle of the Church*,—are all individually, as if by exact name and

* "One of the main designs of the Apocalypse is to show that believers in Christ are the true '*Israel of God*' (Rev. ii. 19; iii. 12; xi. 1, 2; xxi. 2, 10). The sealed "thousands" represent the *blessed company of all faithful people*, gathered together from all parts of the world, and constitute the Church universal, redeemed by Christ's blood, and sealed by His Spirit, and continuing stedfastly in the doctrine preached by His apostles, and taught by the Holy Ghost."—Bishop Wordsworth.

† Rev. xiv. 1—4; xvii. 14.

number, known to Him,* marked as if by the "*Seal of the living God*," and secured by Him, as sheep of Christ's pasture, *never to perish*, and not one to be wanting at the last day.†

4.—The *mystic numbers*‡ sealed, 144,000, are clearly announced to the apostle, in the vision; in whole, and in part, according to the order of twelve distinct "*tribes*," containing 12,000 each. The number of His faithful and elect people, in whole or in part, at any particular period, or in the aggregate at the end,§ must be perfectly

* 1 Kings xix. 18; John x. 14; also, Isa. xlv. 9, 10, and Acts xv. 18.

† John x. 28, 29; Mal. iii. 16, 17. See a scriptural delineation of the character of "*the sealed*," Ephes i. 1—13.

‡ The number 12 is a favourite Apocalyptic number; see Rev. xii. 1; xxi. 12, 14, 17, 21. Compare also Matt. xix. 28. It must be remembered that the number here of 12,000 in each of twelve tribes, is not to be taken secularly and literally, but in the sacred, prophetic, and symbolical sense of some definite, perfect, and complete number of God's people known to Him; located in various parts, like the twelve tribes, and composed of a great variety of true members; yet composing a perfectly complete Church, compact as a square, and in *unity with itself*, all of one faith, one mind, and one heart in love to God the Father, faith in Christ the only Mediator, and dependance upon the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. See Ps. cxxii. 3, 4.

§ See v. 9—17. God never leaves Himself without a witnessing number of *sealed ones*, as distinct from the mass of the careless and the godless. Even in the worst days of Israel, under Ahab and Jezebel, there were 7,000 faithful ones, reserved, and true to God, yet unrecognised and unknown to the prophet Elijah, who thought that "*he only was left*." 1 Kings xix. 14; Rom. xi. 4, 5.

known to Him, and to Him only, *who knoweth all things*. The whole of Christendom is, as it were, mapped out before John; and, at this time, he sees God's children, like the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of old in "all the tribes," spread over the promised land, the chosen nation, and distinct from the Gentiles; separated from the outward and professedly Christian Church, like Israel from the heathen; marked by the angel of God, and sealed by the Holy Spirit "until the redemption of the purchased possession," which is "*the earnest of the inheritance.*"*

5.—Some notice deserves to be taken of the names and order of "*the tribes*" out of which the "sealed" are stated to be selected. We observe "*Judah*" placed *first*, though he was the *fourth*

* Ephes. i. 14. St. Paul is very clear and full on the subject of the advantage gained by the Gentiles under the Gospel, and its conveying to them great *spiritual* benefits generally, without respect of person or nationality. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, and of the Spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God." (See Rom. ii. 26—29; ix. 8; Gal. iii. 29.) It is impossible, when we compare these and other passages, to confine (as some do) the "sealing" to the *literal* Israel, instead of the general Christian Church. Great *national* promises remain to the Jews; but the *spiritual* are free to all.

son of Jacob, in order of birth;* because from this tribe Jesus Christ, called "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*," descended, after the flesh:—

"The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*,
Nor a Lawgiver from between his feet,
Until *SHILOH* come,—
And to Him shall the gathering of the people be."†

The putting of Judah first has been rightly regarded as giving a whole Christian significance, and not Jewish, to the tribal sealing. "*Reuben* and "*Gad*," the second and third in order, are prophetically stated by Jacob,

(*REUBEN*.)—"The beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity,
And the excellency of power."

(*GAD*.)—"He shall overcome at the last."

6, 7.—Simeon and Levi, in order of birth, the second and third sons, are degraded to the seventh and eighth places, with some reference doubtless to the prophecy,

"Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation . . .
Cursed be their anger for it was fierce," &c.—

* The *order of birth* of Jacob's sons (see Gen. xxix. 32, xxx. 1—24; xxxv. 16—20):—

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah	..	Leah's children.
Dan and Naphtali		Bilhah's "
Gad and Asher		Zilpah's "
Issachar and Zebulun		Leah's "
Joseph and Benjamin		Rachel's "

The order in Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix. 3—27):—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin.

† "*Shiloh*," "*שִׁילֹה*," the Peacemaker, "Prince of Peace." (Gen. xlix. 10.) The gathering of "*all Israel*" to Him cannot be said to be accomplished yet, but it will be, *before the end*.

showing, in a moral sense, that anger and revenge, with unsanctified zeal even in a righteous cause, are not pleasing, but offensive in the sight of God.*

8.—*Two tribes, Dan and Ephraim*, usually enumerated, are entirely omitted. Let us observe, again, the prophecy of Jacob,

“Dan shall be a serpent by the way !
An adder in the path that biteth the horses’ heels,
So that his rider shall fall backward.”

No tribe was more noted for the practice of image-worship than this ; so that some of the Jewish writers themselves represent the name of “*Dan*” as *proverbial of idolatry*.†

Ephraim, in whose tribal portion was Samaria, may be remembered as the foremost to revolt from Judah,‡ under the rebellion of Jeroboam. After

* See their furious attack and treacherous slaughter of the Shechemites (Gen. xxxiv. 26), because of their sister Dinah.

† Judges xviii. 1—31 ; Jer. xvi. 17. Ireneus regards *Dan* as a symbol of the “*Man of Sin*.” *The idolatrous Church of Rome may rightly be designated under this excluded nominal Church*. Well might the affected patriarch, after mentioning *Dan*, under the prophetic influence, parenthetically exclaim, “*I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord !*”—Gen. xlix. 16—18.

‡ See 2 Sam. ii. 9 ; 1 Kings i. 25 ; also Isa. vii. 9, 17. There seems some monition to Christian Churches under this marked omission of “*Ephraim*,” to beware of *disloyalty to Christ and the royal order of the Church*. Wilful separation and division into democratic sects and parties, with jealousies and envyings, like the *ten tribes* against *Judah*, or the acknowledging of a *king-priest* upon earth, instead of looking to the *sole kingship of Christ* over His Church, amount to actual rebellion and *disloyalty to God*.

this event we find Ephraim, in the prophetic books, frequently put for the whole ten tribes, as the largest and most important, but still infected much with idolatry, heresy, and schism; according to the action of Israel when Joseph brought his two children, as if by Divine prompting, the aged and blind patriarch, to the surprise of Joseph, *crossed his hands,** giving the precedence to *Manasseh* the younger; anticipating, it would seem, the *marked omission* by the Spirit of God of a Church that should rebel against the royal sovereignty of Judah's Lion, and the passing by of a Christian tribe infected greatly with idolatrous abominations.†

As the numbers are the same, and of one uniform standard, out of each *tribe* which

* Gen. xlviii. 14.

† Two other peculiarities in this list have been noticed; (1) the insertion of the tribe of *Levi*, whereas his name is not found in the tribal division of the land; since, having the sacerdotal office, he was to possess no territorial inheritance among his brethren; which may show that, in the Christian community, the special order of a *sacrificing priesthood* is abrogated, Christ Himself having become the One and only sacrificing Priest, "the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"—*King and Priest* at the same time; and all "the saints," being *equally* made "*a royal Priesthood*" in Him; (2) little notice is taken, in the Apocalyptic list, of *the order of birth*, or whether sprung from Jacob's "*wives*," or the "*handmaids*." So, in the spiritual (Christian) Church, titles and circumstances of worldly birth or honour are of *very little account*; the preference, in God's view, being not of homeborn or stranger, elder or younger, children of free or bond, but of being "children of God, by faith in Christ," and partakers of His distinguishing grace.

possessed Canaan ; so, we may believe, there is a uniform *rule of faith* by which all the members of the Church saved by Christ* will be judged. The selection from each being about one-fiftieth part from the whole (12,000 out of each tribe, which averaged, as in Solomon's days, 600,000), shows to us that "*all are not Israel which are of Israel*,"† and confirms our Lord's statement, "*Many are called, but few are chosen*."‡ Many are ready enough to call Christ, "Lord, Lord;" but *few*, comparatively, are wise and prompt to "*do the things which He says*."§

May our great desire and striving be to be numbered among those who have the "*seal of the living God*," by having the seal of the Holy Spirit, as proved before God inwardly on our hearts, and outwardly on our foreheads as proved in our character among men. No *external* sign of our belonging to a visible Church,|| however sound

* As the "*twenty-four elders*" above (Rev. iv. 4), seem representative numbers of the *Church triumphant*; so the 144,000, the round numbers from all the tribes, or Churches, may be a representative number of God's *elect and sealed*, in flourishing ages of the *Church Militant*. † Rom. ix. 6. ‡ Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14.

§ Matt. vii. 21—27; Luke vi. 46.

|| The *inward grace* accompanies the *outward sign* only when the sacrament is rightly received (see Art. xxvii. of the Church of England.) The outward sign, in Baptism, is not saving without the *inward grace*. It is the *inward grace* of the Spirit, when it accompanies the *outward sign* of water, *the being* "*born of water and of the Spirit*," (John iii. 5. 6,) which proves the baptized to have the *seal of God*.

it may be in the faith, can possibly avail us unless we are sound in creed, decided in religious life, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Holding the *unity of the scriptural and apostolic faith of the universal Church,* preserving the bond of peace, and walking in newness of life*, are the best visible tests of the “sealed” of God. Holy Scripture has given another sign, called “*The foundation of God, which standeth sure, having this seal—The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*”†

And though “*the many*” have not yet in heart-fellowship flocked, as they should, to the standard of Christ, as pledged soldiers of the cross;‡ yet,

* There is something in the number “*Twelve*,” as used in this *Sealing Vision*, reminding us of the necessity of *apostolicity* in the unity of the faith of the true “*Church built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.*” (Ephes. ii. 20.) *Twelve* is the number of apostles—*nor were there ever any more sent forth by Christ*, in spite of the conceited claims and assumptions of the modern *Irvingites* calling themselves *Catholic Apostolic*; that number being multiplied into itself, and by a thousand, offers an apt illustration of the company of believers of “*a thousand generations*,” holding the apostolic doctrine, discipline, and fellowship unto the end in solid constancy and unity. (See Bp. Wordsworth, *in loco*.) The *unity*, be it remembered, is one of faith and doctrine, the *diversity* chiefly being in the *mode* of church government and discipline. The motto of “the sealed” might be expressed as—“*In necessariis unitas, in circumstantiis diversitas, in omnibus charitas.*”

† 2 Tim. ii. 19.

‡ It was common among Greeks and Romans to imprint some mark on the persons of soldiers and slaves, by which it

let us admire and praise God for the growth of the little "*grain of corn*" which once fell from our Saviour's hand into the furrows of Judea; which seemed to die, but through the rain and waterings of God's Spirit has brought forth "*much fruit*"*—so that,

"A little one has become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation!
I the Lord will hasten it *in His time*!†

Lastly, the sealed of God being taken out of the figurative *patriarchal tribes and families* should remind us of keeping to the old and well-tried doctrines of the Bible—the inspired word of God; not allowing ourselves to be carried away by novel and strange "*doctrines of men*" ambitious of notoriety and presuming that all the world is wrong but themselves. Let us abide stedfast in Christ and *His apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers*; ever testifying the firmness of our undeviating faith in the solidity of our Christian principles, the consistency of our daily life, and the stability and fervency of our worship of the one JEHOVAH—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity; and so lifting up our voices‡ against the criminal errors of

might be known whom they served and to what master they belonged. Paul may allude to this, when he says, "*I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*" (Gal. vi. 17.)

* John xii. 23, 24.

† Isa. lx. 22.

‡ See Ezek. ix. 3--6.

Infidelity, Socinianism, and Papal and other apostasies; against the apathy of indifference, the boastings of exclusiveness,* and the abominations of idolatry and ungodliness.†

“ *There’s room* in God’s eternal love

To save thy precious soul!

Room in the Spirit’s grace above,

To heal, and make thee whole!

“ *There’s room* within the Church for thee,

Through blood of Christ Divine!

Room in the white-rob’d company

For that dear soul of thine!

“ *There’s room* in heaven among the throng,

And harps and crowns of gold,

And glorious palms and victory’s song,

And joys that ne’er grow old.

“ *There’s room* around thy Father’s board

For thousands o’er and o’er!

O, come, and welcome to thy Lord!

Yea, come and doubt no more!”‡

* There are several sects besides the Roman Catholic, such as Plymouthites, Apostolic Catholic, &c., which would *uncharitably* confine salvation *solely* to their own body:—*Extra ecclesiam (mean) non est salus!*

† *Idolatry* consists not only in the acts of bowing down to visible images, and worshipping them or invisible saints, but, also, in worshipping and serving the creature and the flesh more than the Creator who is a Spirit; in *denying God* and substituting for Him the independence of human intellect (1 Cor. i. 20, 21), or *covetousness*, and the love and worship of mammon (Col. iii. 5.); in short, “*men not liking to retain God in their knowledge*,” and, therefore, “*given over to a reprobate mind*,” to “*work all uncleanness with greediness*.” (Rom. i. 24—28, and Ephes. iv. 19.)

‡ See Luke xiv. 22.

REV. VII. 9-17.

THE WHITE-ROBED, PALM-BEARING MULTITUDE.

—HOSANNAS—GREAT TRIBULATION PASSED—
COMPLETE HAPPINESS WITH GOD THE FATHER
AND THE SON.

9.—After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: 10.—And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11.—And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12.—Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13.—And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14.—And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they

which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15.—Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16.—They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17.—For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

9.—If the apostle, or any servants of Christ, should have suffered a momentary feeling of disappointment to pass through their mind, upon view of the tribal and limited number of the “*sealed*,” out of all the Churches of the Spiritual Israel, (verse 1—8); the present vision of the vast white-robed and triumphant multitude of redeemed saints in glory would serve speedily to dispel the illusion.

John sees, to his great astonishment, an innumerable “*multitude*” standing “*before the throne, and before the Lamb*,” as though newly arrived in heaven, out of a great variety of “*nations, kindreds,*

people, and tongues." It is no longer "*the Church of the first-born*," or, "*the first-fruits to God and the Lamb*;" but it is the *great harvest* of souls gathered together at the end of the age, when the Gospel has extended over all the world, and has been preached for a witness among all nations, Jew and Gentile. It seems impossible to limit this supplemental vision of the saved to any period of the Church short of the final consummation of the present dispensation of "*the Gospel of the kingdom*." Just as with the "*great earthquake*" in the *Sixth Seal* (see Rev. vi. 12—17), we had a presignification of two great and leading events—one intermediate, the other, final;* and, as under the "*first seal*" in the vision of the "*white horse*" and its rider going forth, *conquering and to conquer*, we had a symbolical illustration of the successful beginning, progress, and final issue of the truth of Christ; so, we see, in this chapter, prognostications of two grand gatherings of God's elect people out of the evangelized world—the one early, the other late—the one circumscribed in place and numbers, the other unlimited and countless; the one at a period compared to the ingathering of the first-

* Viz., (1) the age of Constantine and the general conversion of the empire from paganism to Christianity; and, (2), the last convulsion of human society upon the second advent of Christ, and the overthrow of antichrist, when "*His way shall be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations*." (Ps. lxxvii.)

fruits,”* the other in the last days, when the harvest of the whole earth is reaped, the “*tares*” are burnt, and the good “*wheat*” is gathered “into the garner.”†

Like the martyrs, under the “*Fifth Seal*,” this innumerable company are described as all clothed with “*white robes* ;” this being the well-known‡ sign of justification by faith “*in the blood of the Lamb*” (verse 14), and acceptance by the Father as His restored and adopted children.

They have, also, “*palms in their hands*,” in token of harvest rejoicing, and hosannas of triumph, as at the great Jewish *Feast of Tabernacles*,§ when the ingathering of the harvest was celebrated.

10.—They utter their hosanna-songs of praise with a loud voice, in sign of harvest-rejoicing and triumphant termination of all their toils, with abundant fruit to their labours, through God’s infinite mercy and bounty, ascribing

“Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne,
And unto the Lamb !”

* The 144,000 are so called. (Rev. xiv. 4.)

† Matt. xiii. 37—43 ; Mark xiii. 26, 27 ; 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15 ; Rev. xx. 5, 6.

‡ See Rev. iii. 4, 5, 18 ; vi. 11.

§ See Levit. xxiii. 33—42. *The Feast of Tabernacles* was observed in the seventh month, five days after the day of Atonement, and beginning and ending with the Sabbath ; on which “*holy day*” branches of the palm tree were borne aloft in the hand, and the people were to “*rejoice before the Lord*.”

11.—Upon this, the promiscuous conclave of all the angels assembled in the outer circle of the temple-court* round about the “*elders*,” who represented the redeemed, and “*the four living creatures*,” the higher orders of “ministering spirits,” are observed falling low on their faces before the throne of the Most High, in the act of solemn and united adoration, thanksgiving and praise, and uttering the loud congregational—“*Amen!*”

12.—By this, the whole assembly would seem to give assent to the *great truth* previously proclaimed in their songs of praise by the white-robed multitude, and affirm the verity of their full and harmonious confession concerning *the electing love of the Father upon the throne, in the plan of man's Salvation, and the atoning efficacy of the blood of the Lamb as the sole procuring cause of justification*; showing the complete accord and fellow-feeling

It was at this festival, when the acclamations of the whole people greeted our Lord on His entry from Bethany to Jerusalem, and “the multitude that went before, and that followed after,” cried, singing—

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!”—(See Mat. xxi. 8—10;

John xii. 12, 13.)

The *palm trees* were very fine and flourishing in Judea: they have been called “princesses of the vegetable world,” and “banners of the climate.” Both their fruit (the date) and their leafy branches, for shade and purposes of triumphal processions, have been much esteemed. * See Rev. v. 11.

of all the celestial inhabitants* in the wisdom and glory of the work of human redemption, by Christ Jesus, the equal and co-eternal Son of the Father, saying—

“Blessing, and glory, and wisdom,
Thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might,
Be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

13.—And in order that the apostle and the Church on earth may have their special attention drawn to this *vast multitude of the saved* “*which no man could number*,”† and thoroughly understand the spiritual meaning of the vision, John is asked, by one of the “*elders*” near the throne, if he is acquainted with the character and origin of the white-robed throng, with the reason of their being placed near the throne in heaven, and the nature of their triumphant joys.

14.—To this John very humbly and meekly

* There appears some allusion in this united gathering of all the hosts of heaven, with the redeemed, to that which St. Paul states (Ephes. i. 7—10) of Christ:—“*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He had purposed to himself; that, in the dispensation of the fulness of time [no doubt the coming millennial age of the Church], He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him!*” See, also, Heb. ii. 5, where “*World to come*” means the coming, glorious, future age.

† The fact of their number being impossible “to count,” from the vast array of the redeemed souls before the Seer’s eyes, will

answers, "*Sir, thou knowest*"—as much as to confess that the redeemed spirits before the throne, the "royal priesthood" above, must know far better concerning heavenly truths and realities than the most privileged saint below, who still, as man, needs to be taught, and can see, at best, but dimly.*

15—17.—Then the "elder" informs him, and us, as follows:—(1) That all this multitude had come out of *very* "*great tribulation*" on earth,† and had persevered through severe trials of faith and patience, holding the beginning of their confidence stedfast unto the end; (2) that they had believed in the all-sufficient Atonement made by Christ on the cross for their justification, and so lived a holy life in accordance with their holy

recal to our minds the promise made to Abraham, in whose "seed" (which is Christ) "*all the nations of the earth were to be blessed*"—a promise which may be taken secondarily, as to Abraham's literal and fleshly progeny, but, principally, *as to the spiritual Israel*, the children of the true patriarchal and evangelical faith that justifies—who would be "*as the stars of heaven,*" or, as "*the sand upon the sea shore,*" for multitude. (See Gen. xxii. 17, 18. Compare Ps. lxxii. 17; Isai. xi. 9; Habak. ii. 14.

* See 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12. The *knowing in part*, and seeing as through a (dim) mirror—such as the ancients had, only of brass or other metal, horn, talc, or transparent stone—and that "darkly," "*εν αινιγματι*," as in a riddle (see Marg.), well illustrates the utter imperfectness of man's unaided knowledge in the present state.

† The "*Great Tribulation*" is expressed very strongly in the Greek—"της θλιψεως της μεγαλης," the tribulation, the

faith, virtually and figuratively,* *making their robes white in the blood of the Lamb*; and, (3) that, for the above reasons, and through the power and efficacy of their Redeemer's merits, their happy spirits are seen before the throne of God, the Father and the Son, in the temple of heaven; they serve Him perpetually and unweariedly day and night, and have the Father's presence and

great one. From this, some have thought the great redeemed multitude must represent only martyrs, or those who were saved at the last out of some great tribulation coming upon the whole world, before or at the advent of Christ to judgment. This interpretation seems not quite warranted here, and would destroy the chief beauty of the grand vision of the white-robed ingathering and the harvest-rejoicing, as at the palm-bearing Festival of Tabernacles. The *tribulation* which our Saviour taught His disciples and Church to expect is *tolerably general to all* (John xvi. 33): "*In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*" In Matt. xxiv. 21 the *greatest of all tribulations* is spoken of by our Lord, as happening to His people in Judea, and He warns them to "*flee to the mountains,*" and to pray that their flight might "*not be in winter;*" all which we know occurred when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and the Christians fled to Pella, and to the mountainous country beyond Jordan, and were safe. *Another great tribulation to the Jews, as a nation*, is predicted in Dan. xii. 1, which seems to refer onward to the last days. But, surely, Christians, in general, have their "*much tribulation,*" (Acts xiv. 22,) though, of course, in some seasons of the Church, *fiercer* than at others. (See, also, 1 Pet. i. 5—8, Rev. xiii. 7; xv. 2; xxi. 7.)

* *Making robes white in blood* does not necessarily imply *martyrdom*. It is a common image of washing and cleansing from sins. (See Ps. li. 5—7, Isai. i. 16—18; Zech. xiii. 1.)

favour continually with them; so that they can never again suffer from the toils and troubles, the pains and infirmities, the hunger and thirst, the cold and heat of their mortal and earthly condition; for now, in the heavenly state, the Lamb of God, by the Father's right hand, their Redeemer and Brother, their Friend and Deliverer, the Good Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, will evermore tend them and be with them for their happiness and glory, providing them with such good things as pass man's understanding—conducting them, as it were, onward, to "*living fountains of waters*," that shall satisfy every want and quench every thirst;* while, with a Divine power and Almighty and loving care, He "*wipes away all tears from their eyes*."†

There cannot be any loftier subject of lawful ambition placed before a being like fallen man, with an immortal soul, than that which we have before us in the splendid vision of the white-robed multitude. Let us, then, aim after a place among the highly honoured and privileged company, which shall meet hereafter around the exalted

* A reference may be intended to the waters of the river of life. (Rev. xxii. 1, 2.)

† This expression, which occurs again Rev. xxi. 4, may intimate to us that not only will every cause and source of sorrowing be removed, in the heavenly state, but every painful feeling which might spring from the remembrance of past sighs and tears, griefs and troubles, will be entirely prevented.

throne of the Most High, in the presence of the Lamb, and sing hosannas of triumph, ascribing all the glory of "*salvation to our God.*" If we "*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*" and make the care of the soul, in its being washed in the blood of Atonement, "*the one thing needful;*" if we "*strive,*" with all earnestness of spirit and prayer for grace, through the One great Mediator, and *Him only*,* "*to enter in at the strait gate,*" and walk in "*the narrow way*"† that leadeth unto life; assuredly we shall not come short at

* How many *fatal* errors, shutting men out from heaven, have sprung up in the Christian community on this great and essential article of the faith!—"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus"—"Immanuel." (Matt. i. 23.)—"By Him, ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) This pulls down, at one blow, all human and creature-mediatorships, such as Virgin Mary, saints, angels, &c. It tears up self-righteousness, root and branch, with all its dependence upon the *merit* of good works as part of a sinner's justification before God. It destroys the necessity, and denounces the dishonour done to the Saviour in any pretended repetition of a *Sacrifice* for sins, bloody or unbloody, upon any altar, or in any propitiatory "mass;" since, "*By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,*" (see Heb. x. 12—14): and "*ye are complete in Him.*" (Col. ii. 10.)

† The "*way,*" is called "*narrow,*" not of God's making, for He invites *all* to come through Christ as "The Way;" but because few, comparatively, accept the invitation, and "*find it.*" (Matt. vii, 13, 14.) And the "*gate*" is "*strait*" because there is only one direct entrance to the way of salvation, and that is through Christ's *blood and righteousness*; and it will not allow men to bring in with them the load of their sins. It is like the "*needle's eye*" in this respect.

the last ; but, whatever tribulation we may have previously to pass through, doubtless we shall (like Daniel)* “*stand in our lot,*” among the palm-bearing victors, “*at the end of the days.*”

“ Who are *these*, of dazzling brightness,
Cloth'd in God's own righteousness ?
These, whose robes of purest whiteness,
Shall their lustre still possess,
Still untouched by Time's rude hand ?—
Whence comes *all this glorious band* ?

These are they who have contended
For their SAVIOUR's honour long !—
Wrestling on, till life was ended,
Following not the faithless throng !—
These have well the fight sustain'd—
Victory by the LAMB have gain'd !”

* Dan xii. 12, 13.

REV. VIII. 1—6.

OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.—HALF-HOUR
SILENCE.—INCENSE-OFFERING ANGEL.—SEVEN
ANGELS WITH SEVEN TRUMPETS,

AND when he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2.—And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3.—And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4.—And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand. 5.—And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6.—And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

1.—The “*Seventh*,” and last of the seals, is now broken and opened. As if in the solemnity of the final act of unveiling the remaining chequered future of the Church militant on earth, with the deep impressions still fresh in remembrance of the peaceful and triumphant scene just closed*—like the thrilling calm before the boisterous storm—there is represented a state of things resembling “*silence in heaven about the space of half an hour* :”—

“ ’Twas as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
 As hush as death ! Anon, the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the regions ! ” †—

Whatever this portentous “*silence*” ‡ prefigured in the purposes of God, it would prove profitable to the apostle, and to the Church below, which he represented — as seasons of rest from toil ever seem to do — for calm and grateful retrospect on the past merciful dealings of God, and devout preparation for that which lies before, in the inscrutable vicissitudes of a wise, overruling Providence.

* See latter part of Rev. vii.

† Shakspeare—“*Hamlet*,” Act 2, Sc. 2.

‡ Some writers have thought this “*half-hour*” *silence* merely significant of some brief, indefinite space of time, as it appeared to the Seer in the vision during “*the Lord’s Day*.” Others consider that a period of years, between seventy and eighty, are implied, of a tolerably tranquil time to the empire and the

2.—“*The Seven Angels*” from among those who are privileged to *stand in the presence of God*,* and to be entrusted with the affairs of men, are seen receiving “*seven trumpets*”† given into their hands by the command of the Most High. But, they are withheld from sounding them while the war-like troubles which they portend are in abeyance. The clouds are gathering, and darkening with some circumstances of dire chastisement upon the Roman earth. The flood is coming; but the ark of the true Church is safe.

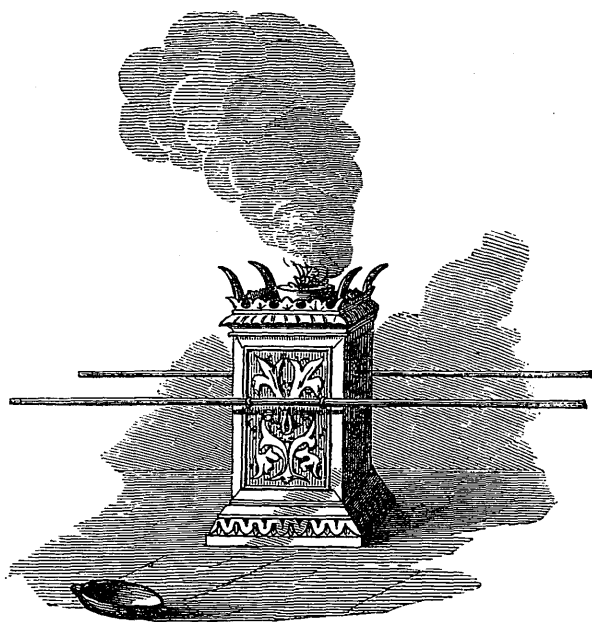
3, 4.—To advise the servants of God of their safety in the day of external danger and calamity, as well as to call attention to the much-availing

Church, between Constantine and Theodorus, who died A.D. 395. This is calculated as follows:—Taking the twelve hours of “*the Lord’s Day*,” during which the visions of the Apocalypse passed before John, embracing events reaching through eighteen centuries at least, we find *each hour* embraces about one hundred and fifty years, consequently the “half hour” would be about seventy-five.

* “*The seven angels*” are not mentioned before, as though their titles and offices in behalf of man were well known in heaven, and always the same. Thus “*Gabriel*” (Luke i. 19), says of himself, “*I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.*”

† “*Trumpets*”—The symbol here of battle and the alarm of war, of tumult and strife, of clamour and faction. As the “*Seventh Seal*” embraces the stirring events under these “seven trumpets;” so, the *seventh trumpet* contains the “*seven last vials*” which fill up the measure of earth’s night of troubles and “cup of trembling,” till the opening of the millennial day of her glory.

power of "*effectual fervent prayer*,"* offered in affliction by the righteous, through the God-man Mediator, another angel comes and appears at



the golden altar of burnt incense,† which is before the mercy-seat—like the high priest of old in the

* James v. 16—18.

† See view of this Altar, which stood immediately before the veil (Exod. xxx. 1, and xl. 26, 27). It was called "*golden*" because it was covered with a crown or plating of *gold*, emblematic of *purity, grace, excellence, and spirituality*. If prayer is wanting in these qualities, *it avails not*.

daily service of the temple—standing in front of it, and with a “*golden censer*” in his hand, has much incense in it *given to him*, to offer before the throne with the prayers of all the true worshipping saints. The smoke of this incense immediately ascended up before God with acceptance, out of the angel’s hand, from the golden altar.

We may understand from this, (1) that in days of impending judgments, the saints of God are the real “*salt of the earth*,” preserving it from entire corruption; (2) that *the prayers of the faithful and upright are God’s delight*, ascending as with perfume of sweet incense to His Divine presence; and (3) that it is only by means of the “*great High Priest of our profession*” sympathising as *Fellow-Man* with us,* and who ever liveth to make intercession for transgressors, that the many

* It may account for the mention of *the great High Priest* as “*another Angel*,” without pointing to His Divine nature in particular, if we consider that Christ’s office of Mediator—for presenting prayers, pleading, and interceding—is one which calls chiefly for the exercise of His *human sympathy*, rather than His Divine Power. He was made *man* for our sakes, that He might feel for us as a Friend and Brother, in our sins and necessities. Hence St. Paul, in speaking of our Lord in His especial character and office as the “*One Mediator between God and men*,” styles Him, “*The Man Christ Jesus*.” (1 Tim. ii. 5.) The same also may explain why the Second Person of the God-head-Trinity is frequently, in the Old Testament, styled “*Angel of the Lord*,” “*Messenger of Jehovah*,” “*Angel of His Presence*,” “*Angel of the Covenant*,” &c.; and, in the New Testament, “*Son of Man*,” “*Son of David*,” “*My Father is greater than I*.” (John xiv. 28.), &c.

prayers of God's people offered through His merits,* like much incense given into His hands for the golden censer of His Priestly Office, can find favour in the Father's sight, and draw down His grace and blessing.

5.—A sure token is given that any other prayers, except those "*of all saints*" offered in sound faith through Christ as the alone Mediator, are rejected and highly displeasing to God; and that wrath, on this account, is ready to issue from the throne and fall upon the unbelieving, at any moment. The "*angel*" before mentioned is seen taking fire from the same altar; and, instead of using it for burnt incense to ascend up as meritorious toward the mercy-seat, *casts it downward into the earth*,† as if with much threatened indignation from the insulted justice of Jehovah. The immediate issue of this significant act was, that there arose loud storms, like "*thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake*,"‡ with confused "*voices*," as though men

* The "*Golden Censer*," is described as emblematic of the *merits of Christ*, through Whom alone sinners, even by their prayers, can have access to the Father. See John xvi. 23, 24; Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12.

† The *casting fire* upon (or into) the earth, is declared by our Lord Himself to be one of His *judicial* acts to which He has been called. (Luke xii. 49.) It is known that, before the end of the fourth century, the proper essential doctrine of the *one sole Mediatorship of Christ* began to be overlaid with *prayers to the Virgin, invocations of martyrs, &c.*

‡ See Rev. iv. 5; xi. 19; xvi. 18, where these peculiar phenomena are signs of severe judgments from God and great changes among mankind.

were engaged in deadly feuds, with the noise of embattled hosts and the demon of strife, division, and discord, abroad in all directions in the Church and in the world.

6.—Now, at once, and without more delay, or longer forbearing and “*silence*” in the courts of Heaven, the seven angels who stood ready at God’s signal, with their seven trumpets in their hands—

“*Prepared themselves to sound!*”

In times of trouble, either present or impending, how good it is to have recourse to the “throne of grace” in prayer! How good to remember that we have an ever-living “*Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous,*”* always ready to accept our supplications and intercessions, and present them, through the sweet incense of His atoning sacrifice, when spiritually offered† in His all-prevailing and all-powerful name. He alone has authority to hold “*the golden censer*” at the altar on high, so that our offerings, however

* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

† The outward sign of “*burnt incense*” being offered on the golden altar should not take the mind off from the *spiritual* meaning and intention of these visions in the symbolical temple on high. To introduce “*incense*” as Ritualists, Romanists, Catholic Apostolic (Irvingites), and others, are doing in the Christian congregation, amounts to something very much like blasphemy and idolatry, to be detested by all true believers who would not detract from the *finished sacrifice of Christ*, or return to what St. Paul calls “*mean and beggarly elements,*” the ashes of a by-gone, defunct, and typical ceremonial. (Gal iv. 9.)

imperfect and polluted in themselves, may ascend with acceptance before the Lord of hosts. Through Him both Jew and Gentile have free access by One Spirit unto the Father. Through him, therefore, let us see that we present the sacrifice of prayer and praise, continually, "giving thanks to His name."* By *intercessory prayer*, also, the heart will be expanded in love to the brethren and towards all men, even our enemies; while we join in remembering them at the same mercy-seat of the Father, who Himself is kind and pitiful even to the unthankful and the evil, and who "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." Thus, may we become instrumental in turning some sinner from the error of his ways, in drawing down blessing on ourselves, and, perhaps, assuaging the intensity of some coming woe to others.

"In the hour of trial,
Jesus pray for me!
Lest, by base denial,
I depart from Thee!
When thou seest me waver,
With a look recal;
Nor, from fear or favour,
Suffer me to fall!

"If, with sore affliction,
Thou, in love, chastise,
Pour Thy benediction
On the sacrifice!
Then, upon Thine altar,
Freely offered up,
Though the *flesh* may falter,
Faith shall drink the cup!"

* Heb. xiii. 15.

REV. VIII. 7—13.

THE FIRST TRUMPET: HAIL, FIRE, AND BLOOD.

—SECOND TRUMPET: GREAT BURNING MOUNTAIN CAST INTO THE SEA. — THIRD TRUMPET: FALL OF GREAT STAR, CALLED WORMWOOD.—FOURTH TRUMPET: SUN, MOON, AND STARS DARKENED, IN THIRD PART.—THREE WOES ANNOUNCED.

7.—The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8.—And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9.—And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10.—And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11.—And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters

became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12.—And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13.—And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, and saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

7.—The “*first angel*” puts the trumpet to his mouth, and no sooner begins to blow a *loud* blast, and makes its sound reverberate on the (Roman) earth, than there follow the (symbols of) “*hail, and fire mingled with blood*”—a plague much resembling that which, of old time, afflicted and punished Pharaoh and the Egyptians.* By this, in the “*third part*” of the land, the trees and all green grass seem “*burnt up*.”

The first *four trumpet-blasts* appertain, as is generally agreed, to four remarkable events in the

* See Exod. ix. 22.

history of the Roman empire;* and, consequently, affecting more or less the visible Church of Christ, which was in a great measure nominally spread throughout its whole extent, from the *fourth* century onward.

A considerable *decline of spirituality* had begun to be felt in the Church, soon after the first great burst of zeal and joy at the conversion of the imperial court of Rome to the Christian faith. Multitudes, who were then admitted by baptism into the outward profession of the faith, brought with them, and maintained, many of their early pagan corrupt predilections; so that, in time, a dangerous compromise began to take place between the true God and the spiritual worship taught by the Bible, and the “*gods many and lords many*” of the old Roman superstitions. Hence the introduction of images and the adoration of saints and relics made rapid inroad upon the purity and peace of the Church,† together with the unsound doctrines of the Arians, Donatists, and others.

* These “*four*” (war) events, as will be seen, are (1) the *Goths* under Alaric, (2) *Vandals* under Genseric, (3) *Huns* under Attila, (4) *Ostrogoths* and *Heruli*, under Odoacer, who assumed the title of King of Italy, A.D. 476.

† At an early date, before the death of Constantine, the Church began to be “*torn asunder by the fury of religious factions.*” . . . “In the long period of 1,200 years which elapsed between the reign of Constantine and the Reformation of Luther, the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model.” (See Gibbon, vol. iii., 480.)

About the time of the death of Theodosius the Great (Jan. 17, A.D. 395), great *external troubles* began to be felt in the empire.* “Before the winter of that year had ended (says Gibbon) *the Gothic nation* [in the Illyrian and Moesian provinces] was in arms. . . . their farms were instantly deserted, and they resumed arms at the first sound of the trumpet.”† The conquering ALARIC made three descents upon Italy, urged forward, as he said, by a secret preternatural impulse, to direct his march to the very gates of Rome. His footsteps were marked, in town and country, with ravages of conflagration and blood; till, after a severe famine

“Many,” says Gregory Nazianzen, “who were admitted into the Christian Church, by baptism, were like persons converting by discord the kingdom of heaven into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself!”

* “Even the elements,” writes Ambrose, “seemed to grieve at the death of this mild Christian emperor.” A great earthquake, and strange elemental disturbances, were remarked just preceding his death.

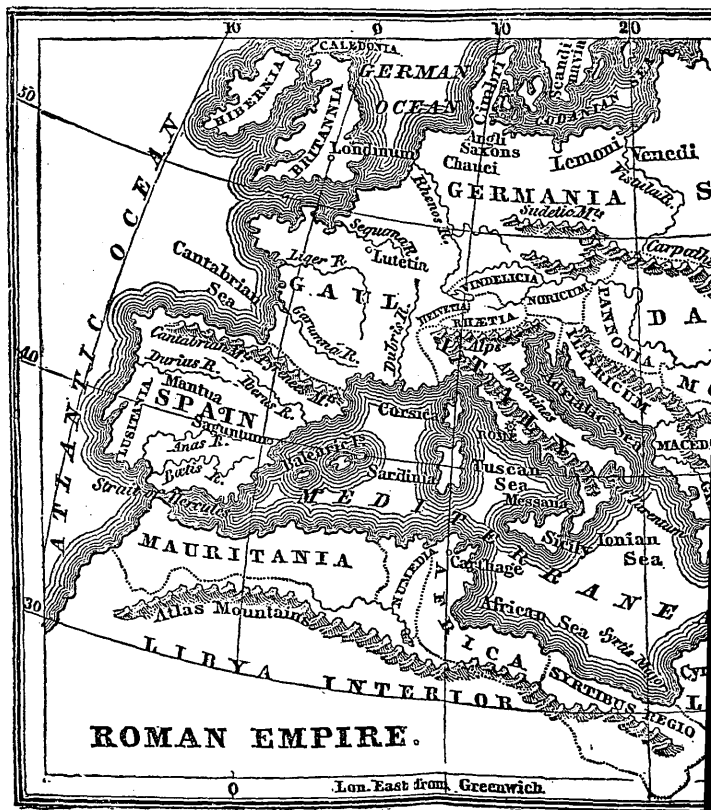
† Their countrymen, from the Dacian forests, soon joined them, crossing from the frozen regions of the north (the quarter of the “*hail*”), and bringing their ponderous waggons over the ice-bound Danube, in a winter of unusual severity. They were first led by their chieftain (Alaric) against the peninsula of Greece, “where,” adds the historian, “the deep and *bloody* lines of their march could be traced by the traveller many years afterwards. . . . They massacred the males of age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females with the spoils of the flaming villages.” Do we not here trace the correctness of the striking images under the first trumpet, “*hail*,” “*blood*,” and “*fire*?”

in the city, the gates were thrown open to the victor, and the Goths marched through the streets by the light of the flames they had kindled. A second time,* under the same leader, was the unfortunate city given over to Gothic plunder.

Thus we have the symbols of the first trumpet accurately identified with the history of the times, in the "*third part*," or western division, of the great Roman empire.† The barbaric Goths, united with northern hordes of Scythians under Rhadagaisus came down, like "*hail*," upon the plains of Italy, and some of the fertile provinces of Gaul and Spain, and caused devastation by fire and sword, in their sanguinary cause; sparing neither feeble age nor gentle sex; the tall cedar "*trees*" of pride, grandeur, and nobility, and the lowly

* "At the hour of midnight the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilised so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia." (Gibbon, vol. ii. 260.) The date of the several Gothic invasions may be reckoned between A.D. 395 and A.D. 410. Rome was founded B.C. 753.

† See *Map*, giving a general view of the Roman Empire. At Constantine's death, A.D. 337, his three sons received each a third part of their father's dominions; *Constantine II.* had Gaul, Spain, and Britain; *Constans* received Italy, Illyricum, and Africa (called the *Western third*), and *Constantius* Asia, Pontus, Thrace, &c. (called the *Eastern third*).





and tender “*grass*” of the commonalty,* falling alike beneath the vehemence of the devouring flame.

In these times of general trouble, we are informed, “the ungodly and profane derived comfort from the powerful intercession of the saints and martyrs”—the very cause which might serve to draw down “*the fire*” upon them from the golden altar;†—while the sound portion of the Church kept and inculcated, like the Bishop of Hippo,‡ the true doctrines of Gospel-grace, sought the mercy of God in fervent prayer, deprecated the infliction of the full measure of justice upon their enemies, solaced the afflicted, and remained immoveable in their faith; cheered by their great

* “*Trees*,” in prophetic language, represent the great and lofty (Isa. ii. 12, 13); herbs, bramble, and “*grass*,” the poorer and weaker classes of society. (Isa. xl. 6—8.)

† See Rev. viii. 5.

‡ The excellent and learned *Augustine* was Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, at the time of its being besieged by Genseric and the Vandals (as seen under the next trumpet). The pious bishop, who had long been led to Christ as his only hope, was taken to his rest “from the evil to come,” before the capture of his city (Hippo). The siege lasted fourteen months, under the defence of Count Boniface. In the third month he was seized with fever, which soon terminated his sufferings. He told the assembled bishops, who had fled to Hippo for refuge, that he had prayed either that God would free them from the siege, or endue them with patience, or take them out of the world to Himself. He died A.D. 430, in his seventy-sixth year. He used to say that a Christian should never cease to repent, even to the hour of his death. The *penitential* Psalms of David were inscribed on the walls of his room in his last sickness.

High Priest and Divine Intercessor, and with the assurances of final victory.

8.—The sounding of the *second angel's* "*trumpet*" brings before us another startling object of *martial* terror,* as the second blow upon tottering, proud imperial Rome (and from the same Divine hand as the former), hastening on the predicted downfall as by an earthquake, of the *oppressing City*. This appears in the form of a "*burning mountain*," like a vast volcanic rock, with its liquid lava-flame descending and falling, as by the decree of heaven, on the sea—its islands, and shores;† the effect of which is seen throughout the "*third part*" or maritime territories thus visited, "the waters" immediately becoming red with "*blood*,"‡ from the violent inflictions of punishment on those who had life and property to lose.

The above figures would imply that in another direction of the empire, called "*the sea*," in its *third part*, a great destruction of human life would ensue upon the impetuous and resistless descent of

* It will be noticed that as the *seals*, up to the sixth, refer more to the Church in the midst of the empire, so the *trumpets* foreshow foreign enemies invading the empire in the Church.

† Islands, shores, and borders of the Mediterranean Sea, especially about Sicily and Italy, well known *volcanic* regions, seem, here, specially designated.

‡ Exod. vii. 19. Another of the plagues on Pharaoh and his people, forms something parallel to that under the second trumpet, *the turning of the waters into blood*.

some adverse power,* who would chiefly direct his attacks upon the maritime parts, the navy and commerce of the country.

A fulfilment of these symbols may be traced in the *sudden revolt* from Rome of the *Vandals* of Spain under their king, "GENSERIC," who (in A.D. 428), crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, made an irruption into Africa, and soon conquered and laid waste the fruitful African provinces extending about ninety days' journey along the Mediterranean coast; carrying terror and desolation, as if in fiery streams of "*blood*," from the Columns of Hercules to the mouths of the Nile.† The celebrated cities of Carthage and Hippo‡ were captured and plundered by the savage and licentious troops led by this naval hero, who declared, somewhat as Alaric had done before, that he was impelled forward to "the guilty coasts whose

* In Jer. li. 25—a strong and hostile assailant, such as Assyria, is thus addressed,

"Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain,
saith the Lord,
Which destroyest all the earth!"

† "The name of *Genserik*," says Gibbon, "deserves an equal rank with Alaric and Attila, in the destruction of the Roman empire." Three hundred large vessels, which the Romans had equipped with great labour and expense against him, were surprised, and most of them sunk or taken in the Bay of Carthage. About 1,100 other ships, fitted out afterwards, shared a similar fate, principally through the fire-ships of the enemy.

‡ See note p. 215, concerning St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. at this trying period.

inhabitants had provoked the Divine vengeance, *by the decree of Heaven.*”* And well did he fulfil his mission. In his marauding expeditions he captured and pillaged Rome, holding possession of it for fourteen days ; and, among the valuable articles of plunder which he took from the capital in his ships, were the *seven-branched golden candlestick and the golden tables*, brought away by Titus from the Temple of Jerusalem.†

In this *second* scourge, which fell mainly upon the *coasts and maritime parts*,‡ as the *first* had

* “They confessed that what they did was not their own doing, but that they were urged and hurried on by the Divine command.”—Salvian, a Latin writer. “‘Where shall we steer?’ said the pilot once to Genseric, who replied, ‘Leave the determination to the winds! They will transport us to the guilty coasts.’” The *wickedness* of the times is much mourned over in these terms by *St. Augustine*:—“You have been trodden under foot by the enemy, and yet have not put a rein on your luxury; you have forfeited the benefits of your calamities; you have been made most wretched, and have continued *most wicked*.”

† It is related, that the ship which conveyed the venerable trophies was wrecked in the voyage to Africa, the only one of the fleet which so suffered. About this time (A.D. 448) our own insular Britain suffered, together with other islands. By the pressure of troubles at home, the Romans were induced to evacuate Britain; the consequence of which was that the Caledonians, from the North, came down with fire and sword and ravaged the country. Deputations were sent to Rome, expressing “the groans of the Britons.” But they sounded in vain. The Saxons were invited to our aid, and to our conquest.

‡ The portion (maritime) of the empire chiefly afflicted may be considered as embracing a *third* of the population, or of the territorial extent.

done upon the more *inland* and *continental*, we mark again the power of God, as putting the trumpet into the angel's hand, punishing the sins of pagan Rome with blood and fire, for her former bloody and fiery persecutions of His people, and which had not been previously avenged; and now, also, vindicating the cause of His hallowed name against *many* who were blending idolatry with His sacred truth, and others who were traitorously renouncing their faith in Jesus to save their bodily lives, through fear of fallen and fellow men !*

10, 11.—The "*third trumpet*" is heard to sound, upon which a large blazing "*star*," or meteor, is seen to fall upon the rivers and fountains of waters, in their "*third part*." A descriptive title is given to this "*star*" or fire-ball, significant of its embittering character, destructive of all joy and comfort. Its name is "*Absinthus*," or "*Wormwood*," which causes the waters upon which it falls to be unfit to drink by its deadly poisoning influence,

* "*Creatures which had life died*," "*τα έχοντα ψυχας*" (ver. 9), is rendered by Bishop Wordsworth as "*those who hold (fast) their lives*," men of carnal and worldly mind who had no fear of God, but loved the world and indulged the lusts of the flesh to the neglect and rejection of spiritual truth, in times of public trial and persecution. (See Matt. x. 28—39.) "*Traditors*," was the name formerly given to those who apostatized, or who conformed to pagan rites for a time, after having professed the faith, and being baptised as believers in Christ. The number of these was sometimes very great.

and so having a baneful effect alike upon vegetation and upon human life.*

Coming like a flashing light from the East, from the far regions of the Volga and Danube, the recognized possessor of "*the sword of Mars*"—ATTILA, King of the Huns, the "*scourge of God*"† (as he was afterwards called), and the terror of the civilized world—appears in next succession to Alaric and Genseric, as helping forward the downfall of the fated empire of Rome. He brought his barbarous forces of Huns over the Alps, and began his martial career upon the portion of the Western empire, whence the *rices* flow down into Italy. He spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy, which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and the Appennines. The rapid flight which the bitter war-meteor took, in his short but brilliant course of conquest, was chiefly through those parts whence the great rivers of Europe have their source, and are swelled by numberless Alpine streams. The "*wormwood*"

* "*Wormwood*," or, *absinthium*, is a plant found in Palestine, and often mentioned in Scripture. It is of a very acrid and bitter taste. Its figurative meaning generally describes a state of great affliction and wretchedness, especially as incurred because of lewdness, idolatry, strife, and hatred. See Deut. xxix. 18; Prov. v. 4; Jer. ix. 15, &c.

† This was a common appellation given to Attila, which, says Gibbon, "was inserted by himself among the titles of his royal dignity." His meteor-like course lasted about twenty years, A.D. 433 to 453.

curse of famine, disease, pestilence, and depopulation followed on his track. At least a "*third part*" of the dominions of Rome was invaded, and affected by the savage march of the conqueror, bringing "slaughter, slavery, and despair" as much as if an embittering evil "*star*" had fallen upon the face of the earth, poisoning the "*rivers and fountains of waters*," which fructify the land and refresh mankind.*

In accordance with the prophetic symbol, Attila, for a short time, flashed like a shooting "*star*" across the political heavens, then fell, was absorbed in the gulph, and seen no more.†

"The abominations of the times," it is said, "seemed to call for such a scourge. The light of

* "The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above 500 miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded and occupied, and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field." (Gibbon, vol. ii. 319, 320.) As descriptive of the accuracy of the title "*wormwood*," with reference to Attila, it was commonly said, that "*the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod*."

† Attila was a pagan, different from Alaric and Genseric, who embraced Christianity as Arians. The term, "*bitter as wormwood*," in a *figurative* sense, may very correctly be applied to his course of conquest, since his design was to restore paganism and destroy the Christian religion; and many were induced to forsake their faith in Christ, and join him in this base attempt. After threatening the destruction of Rome, and retiring at the earnest supplications of Leo III. and his ambassadors, he recrossed the Alps, and died very suddenly of apoplexy, after a night of bridal carousal, A.D. 453." See Dean Milner's "Church History."

Divine grace, revived in the West, purified many souls, and prepared them for sufferings. But with the majority, both *superstition and practical wickedness* increased. Carthage itself was sunk in vice; lewdness was amazingly predominant:—so deplorable a thing is it for men to depart from the simplicity of Christian faith !”*

12.—The sounding of the “*fourth trumpet*” brings under notice the figurative smiting of the “*sun, moon, and stars,*” and their being darkened in “*the third part*”—or, still *tripartite* division of the imperial heavens, as before.

The disasters to the Roman empire, here symbolized, seem to portend a greater blow, and to cause a more effectual political obscuration, than under the previous war-trumpets. We find the Roman emperor, consul, and senate—like “*sun, moon, and stars*” of the firmament—not only eclipsed, but smitten with the darkness of midnight, without returning day.†

With a remnant of Attila’s broken and dispersed forces, a daring adventurer, named ODOACER, comes from the Alpine frontiers; and, gaining power and influence by degrees, as king of the Heruli, he determines to invade Italy and abolish (what

* Dean Milner’s Ch. Hist.

† The obscuring of luminaries of the skies is a favourite prophetic emblem of the decline and fall of rulers, princes, and potentates from their places of earthly loftiness and power. (See Rev. vi. 12—17, &c.)

was then termed) “the useless and expensive office of Emperor of the West!” The last phantom of imperial rule at Rome was *Romulus Augustulus*—two names singularly combined, as if in sarcasm and ridicule of former greatness.* On the invasion of Odoacer, he soon resigned the purple, and the very “*insignia*” of the Roman court were ignominiously conveyed to the Eastern capital, Constantinople; while the barbarian conqueror assumed the title of Patrician and Governor of Rome, and, shortly afterwards, *Theodoric the Ostrogoth* succeeded as independent sovereign, and KING OF ITALY!†

Thus the Western empire, or “*third*” of the once vast united imperial dynasty, was smitten in its “*sun*,” or ruling head; and its “*moon*,” or reflected power in the *consular* dignity, was unable to shine. Its “*stars*,” or senatorial luminaries,

* The real name of the last Emperor of Rome was Augustus; but from his weakness, timidity, and helplessness, the diminutive of *Augustulus* was given him, in scorn, and is that by which he is generally known. He abdicated A.D. 476, and the Roman senate disappeared A.D. 552.

† Theodoric destroyed the rule of the Heruli at Rome and Ravenna, and reigned as independent monarch from A.D. 493 to 526. The vast fabric of Roman power which it had been the work of ages to perfect, was overturned in the short period reckoning from A.D. 376, when the Goths first crossed the Danube, to the extinction of the Western empire, A.D. 476, and the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, A.D. 571. (Robertson.)

were shaded in night's sombre curtain of cloud, unable to relieve the general obscurity :”—

“She saw her glories, star by star, expire,
Till not even a single star remain'd,
To glimmer in the vacant and dark night.”*

13.—Upon this, and before the fifth trumpet's blast, the attention of John is drawn to a new object in the vision, of an “angel flying” over earth through the midst of the sky, and making a loud proclamation able to be heard afar, saying—

*“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth,
by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the
three angels, which are yet to sound !”*

The pause, betokened by this announcement, is not without its special meaning. The All-gracious Shepherd above seems to be preparing His Church and faithful flock (now amongst many false teachers like “wolves in sheep's clothing”), by an interval and respite from public calamities, for

* It is astonishing how writers independent of prophecy, and even opposed to Divine revelation in some respects, seem to refer to the symbols of this trumpet-vision, almost in its very words. Gibbon writes :—“The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance, and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome.” Matt. xxiv. 29, 30. Jerome, before the event, writing from his secluded retreat at Bethlehem, says, “The world's most illustrious sun has been extinguished. The whole world seems, every moment, to expect the day of judgment.”

coming dangers to the faith.* *The overthrow of the Roman domination* was looked upon, by many, as the great event that would introduce *the reign of antichrist*. As he saw the Roman government waning, the godly Jerome warned the Church, from his quiet home at Bethlehem: — “*The hindrance in antichrist’s way is removing, and we heed it not!*”†

From the foregoing, we may be warned to keep ourselves free from the contaminations of an evil and corrupt age, and maintain the integrity and simplicity of our holy faith against the subtle craftiness of specious friends, but real enemies, of Christ. Let us beware of a mangled and perverted Gospel, taught under the guise of Christianity by Romanists, Ritualists, Rationalists, &c., “*with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,*” and, “*with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.*” Let us receive *the truth*, as it is revealed and taught by Christ and His apostles, “*in the love of it,*”

* The time intervening between the end of the fourth and the blowing of the fifth trumpet, the fall of Rome’s power and the rise of Mohammed, is thought to be between fifty and sixty years.

† Jerome, doubtless, had in his mind the prophecy of St. Paul concerning “*that wicked one,*” and “*the man of sin,*” in 2 Thess. ii. 3—8, &c. Among the fathers of the Church, and others, who viewed the Roman imperial power as the *great let and hindrance* to the revealing of antichrist, are Tertullian, Lactantius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Evagrius, and even Gregory the Great.

and maintain it *dearer than our lives*. Then we shall not be in danger of being driven about by every wind of false doctrine, like others who have no settled and sound principles — wavering and double-minded, “unstable in all their ways;” but we shall stand our ground, by God’s strength, in the evil days which may be at hand, and which shall try the solidity of our soul’s foundation-rock!

“The day of wrath draws near,
The dreadful day of doom!
The sinner’s bitter day——
It maketh haste to come!

The moon shall change and flee,
The noon grow dark as night;
The stars shall fall to earth,
In wild and sore affright:

Alas! alas! alas!——
To whom, on that great day,
Shall the sad sinner flee?
On whom for refuge stay?

O, Jesu! save, and bless
O, Son of God, on high!——
Then, safe in Thee we live,
And safe in Thee we die!

Safe to the holy hills,
Safe to the City blest!
Safe from the toil below,
Thou leadest to Thy rest!”

REV. IX. 1—12.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET.—THE MOHAMMEDAN AND SARACENIC WOE.—KEY OF THE PIT.—LOCUSTS: THEIR KING ABADDON, APOLLYON.—THE FIRST “WOE” PAST.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2.—And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3.—And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4.—And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5.—And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6.—And in those days shall men seek death,

and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7.—And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. 8.—And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. 9.—And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10.—And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11.—And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon. 12.—One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two more woes hereafter.

1.—The scene, under the “*Fifth Trumpet*,” which is the first of three special “*Woes*,” is to be considered changed from Rome, and the *Western* (third) portion of the empire, now politically

extinguished,* to the *Eastern* division, and the capital, Constantinople,† which appears unwarned and callous after the many calamities which had befallen her elder sister.

The sounding of this “*Woe*”-trumpet‡ presents to view several objects of remarkable symbolical meaning and interest. The first is that of a “*Star*,” seen as if just fallen§ from the skies, and alighting on the earth; representing some great leader, or teacher, who has a “*KEY*,” descriptive of rule and authority, put into his hands, to open a place beneath—called the “*bottomless pit*.”||

2.—The *abyss* being opened, there is seen issuing

* As observed under the fourth trumpet in the last chapter, A.D. 552.

† *Constantinople* was built and beautified by Constantine, A.D. 330, on the site of Byzantium, which had been nearly destroyed by Severus. When Constantine divided the empire into pretorian prefectures, the Eastern capital soon began to compete with Rome; the wealth of the East was collected there; and the bishops (called afterwards patriarchs) vied with Rome, for some time, for supremacy over the universal Church.

‡ The three last trumpets, (5, 6, and 7,) are called “*woe*”-trumpets, most probably from the fact of their introducing a series of war-plagues which most lamentably affect the state of the Church.

§ Such is the proper meaning of “*πεπτωκοτα*,”—Greek perfect tense.

|| *Abyss*, or “*bottomless pit*,” (mentioned also in Rev. xi. and xx.) literally, is that which is unfathomable—without bottom, therefore without end. The term is applied to the abode of Satan and evil spirits; the “*hell*,” or prison-house, of lost souls, (1 Pet. iii. 19.) See symbolical “*key*,” or “*keys*,” before referred to, Rev. i. 18, and iii. 7; also, afterwards, Rev. xx. 1.

from it the appearance of thick “*smoke*,”* as though from the mouth of a freshly kindled “*great furnace*;” so that the very “*air*” was filled with the noxious vapour, and the face of the “*sun*” was quite obscured while it ascended upward.

3, 4.—As the “*smoke*” continued rising, there could be seen as it were great swarms of “*locusts*”† coming out of the dense fumes and descending to the earth; having power (as from an invisible hand) given them, with “*scorpion*”-stings,‡ to devour and destroy; but a restraining influence, at the same time, was placed over them—showing that they represented men in battle, and not the literal insect of the field—not to hurt tree, or grass, or any green thing, but only “*those men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads.*”§

* “*Smoke*,” as coming from the lower regions, in its dense and obscuring effect, may signify false and corrupt teachings, which darken counsel, and hinder the “*spiritual Light*,” or “*Sun of Righteousness*,” from being properly observed.

† The “*locust*” is especially common in Arabia. This would seem to fix the origin of this “*woe*” to those quarters. It is known as one of the greatest scourges to the vegetable world in eastern countries. Its Hebrew name is “*אַרְבֶּבֶת*,” sounding very *similar* to that of its native country Arabia.

‡ The “*scorpion*” is one of the largest and most formidable of the insect tribe; none more irascible and dangerous. It is found in the East twelve inches in length, with eight feet, eight eyes, and a long jointed tail ending in a pointed weapon-like sting. Both locusts and scorpions are referred to in Holy Scripture. See Deut. viii. 15; compare Luke x. 19, &c.

§ See Rev. vii. 2—4, and xiv. 1.

Let us now notice, before we proceed further, the historical application (as generally understood) of these symbols.

It is well attested by history, that between sixty and seventy years after the destruction of the Western (Roman) empire by the invasions of the Goths and Vandals, before described,—when the “*kingdom was divided*,” according to the prophecy of Daniel, and, instead of being all strong as “*iron*,” became “*part of iron and part of clay*” in the ten toes of the great image’s feet,* *Mohammedanism* arose, and the Saracens began their conquests in Arabia and the East, some time between A. D. 605 and 612.

Descended from the princes of Mecca, MAHOMET (or, Mohammed) had fallen recently into a humble condition in his city, when the transference of the “*key*,” or governorship, had been made to another branch of his family. This preyed upon his feelings; and, it is said, “he retired to a cave, from year to year,” to consult “the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm, whose abode was, not in heaven, but in the mind of the prophet.”† Hence soon issued those pestilential doctrines—adverse to Christ and His Godhead, to redemption by His blood, and salvation by grace—which, like “*the smoke*” of

* Dan. ii. 40—42.

† See Gibbon—who further states, “The injustice of Mecca and the choice of Medina (to which Mahomet escaped when persecuted) transformed the citizen into a prince—the humble preacher into a leader of armies.”

the bottomless pit, from the mouth of the great furnace of hell, soon darkened the air and the sun—the political and religious state of society, the Church and her ordinances.

The progress and effect of this Saracenic and Mohammedan “*woe*” are observed in the numerous “*locusts*,” or swarms of Saracens,† coming forth as from the very exhalation of the bottomless pit, and covering the earth with the devastations of their scorpion-ravages. At one time, it seemed as if, by their resistless conquests,* the whole of Christendom would have been subjugated beneath their sway. Then, the fabulous *Koran*† would have prevailed, contrary to the prediction of Christ, over the sacred doctrines of the Bible, and

* The word “Saracen” is thought to be derived from “*Sara*,” a considerable portion of the Arabian peninsula.

† The conquests of the Saracens soon extended over Persia, India, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, Spain, and many other portions of Europe.

‡ *Koran*, or *Al-Koran*, (“The Reading,”) is the book of the Mohammedans supposed to be revealed direct from God himself to Mahomet, and therefore of higher authority than any other. Its materials are chiefly drawn from Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian sources, collected together and arranged by Abubekr, but very contradictory and full of fanciful stories. *Gibbon* says of it, “The European infidel will peruse with impatience the endless incoherent rhapsody of fable and precept and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea; which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The Divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian Missionary, but his loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the Book of Job.”

“the keys” of the false prophet of Islam, with his crescent standard, over “the keys of the kingdom of heaven”* and the standard of the cross!

But God, in His mercy, interposed His hand, and restrained the tide of invasion and victory. The decree came forth from the eternal throne, as oftentimes, in the extremity of the Church’s danger, against the enemy, “Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.” In the midst of the Mohammedan deluge of false doctrine, sapping the very foundations of true Christianity, the “sealed” portion of the Church of God, who stood their ground manfully in the midst of the overflowing flood, were shut in safely by the Lord in the ark. The profane and fanatical holder of “the key” of the very “gates of hell” and the bottomless pit could not prevail against them!

5.—A limit, we observe, is first placed (verse 4) upon the locust-injury,† not to hurt any who had “*the seal of God on their foreheads;*” and, second, with regard to the time and period of the plague’s *continuance*.

* Matt. xvi. 19.

† If the command *not to hurt any grass, or green thing, or trees*, be taken literally (and not merely to show that the torment of this locust-woe was figurative of the destructive hosts of men), then it receives confirmation in such a proclamation as that of *Abubekr* (the successor of Mahomet) to his army in Syria:—“Destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle only such as you kill to eat.” It was a general order to the invading hosts that *their expeditions were especially directed against idolaters*.

In the first case, it is proved that those countries which were least corrupted with Mariolatry and idolatrous practices then prevalent in Christendom, were *freest* from the Mohammedan invaders; while those which were most addicted to them were the professed objects of attack. "*The men who had not the seal of God on their foreheads*" were, in fact, the greatest sufferers.* In the other case, the intensity of the "*torment*" was to last out five months, or, prophetically, one hundred and fifty days of years;† and it is clearly shown from history that the settlement of the Saracens, and their ceasing, in a great measure, from active propagation of their false faith by fire and sword, took place A.D. 762, exactly one hundred and fifty years after the great outburst of the "*torment*," A.D. 612.‡

* "The parts," (says Bp. Newton) "which remained freest from the general infection were Savoy, Piedmont, and the Southern parts of France, which were afterwards the nurseries of the Waldenses and the Albigenses; and it is very memorable that when the Saracens approached these parts they were defeated with great slaughter by the famous *Charles Martel*, in several engagements, especially at the great battle of Poitiers."

† The *year-day theory* of interpreting prophetic dates such as "*months*," "*weeks*," "*days*," and "*time*," is now generally received in the Church. It may be scripturally inferred from such passages as Num. xiv. 34; Ezek. iv. 6; and Dan. ix. 24—26.

‡ Gibbon and Sismondi relate the decline of the Saracens in such terms as these: "The colossus which had bestridden the whole South was broken. . . . War was no longer the passion of the Saracens. . . . The luxury of the caliphs, now established quietly at Bagdad (A.D. 712), relaxed the nerves and terminated the progress of the Arab empire." Bp. Newton calculates the

6.—It is stated, also, to show the virulence of the scorpion-sting of this plague, that “*men*”—“*the men*”^{*}—would in those times seek for death and not find it; they would desire it but it should “*flee from them.*” “*The men*” who “*had not the seal*” of God’s Spirit, felt within the heart and shown in the life, would have no ground of hope, or trust, or godly consolation in their troubles. They would lose courage and be driven to the depths of discontent and despair; somewhat as Job, in the early and fiercer stage of his affliction, is described as lamenting:

“Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul?
Which long for death, but it cometh not,
And dig for it more than hid treasures?”†

While the ungodly, nominal, and idolatrous members of the Church would be in despair, and many of them drawn away altogether from their faith to a false religion, the true and spiritual

time of the Saracenic woe’s continuance from A.D. 606 to 756. It is noticed by Professor Stuart, that the usual period of locust-devastation is from May to September, inclusive,—just “*five months.*”

* The Greek is “*οι ανθρωποι*”—“*the men*” before alluded to, as not among the “*sealed.*”

† See Job iii. 20, 21. *The wishing for death* by those who were assailed by the Saracens, and threatened if they did not embrace Mohammedanism, shows the extremity to which many must have been driven, who submitted to the invaders, as they proudly and insolently proclaimed—“*Ye Christian dogs! ye know your option!—The Koran, the tribute, or the sword!*”

section of the real members of Christ's mystical body, would not be hurt, but drawn nearer to their Head, and so derive new spiritual strength and comfort from His promises: "*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in anywise hurt you.*"*

7—10.—To make the application of the symbolical figures, under this trumpet, still more certain, as pointing to the Saracen armies and the pest of Mohammedanism which they brought with them, we have next *an accumulation of striking emblems*, all proving, beyond doubt, that the *locust-vision* is to be taken *figuratively*:—

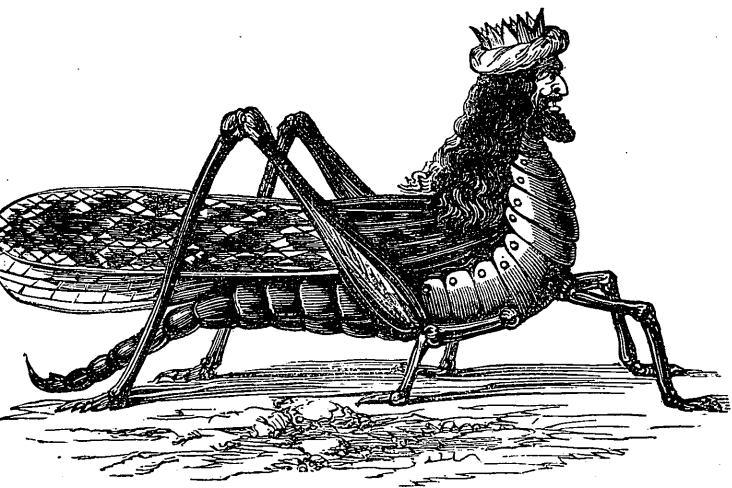
(1), *The "shapes" of the locusts*—"like horses prepared unto battle;† (2), their head-covering—"crowns like gold;‡" (3), their faces—"as the faces of men;" (4), their hair—long and flowing, like that "*of women*;" (5), their teeth—"as the teeth of lions;" (6), their breastplates—"of iron;" (7), their wings' sound—as that of "*chariots of many horses*

* Luke x. 19. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 12—15.

† See *Symbolical Figure of the Locust-King*, as imagined by Mr. Elliott, *Hor. Apoc.* vol. i. p. 410. The great force of cavalry which the Saracens brought into the field, and their lion-like ferocity, their long flowing beard (so different from the Goths), their iron defensive armour, &c., are well known.

‡ *The crowns like gold, on the head*, are generally referred to the wearing of *turbans*. The Arabians' saying was, "God has bestowed upon us *turbans*, which should be to us instead of *diadems*."

running to battle;" (8), their tails—"like unto scorpions"—with "stings;" (9), their power—"to hurt men five months;" (10), their king—"the angel of the bottomless pit."



11.—The name prophetically given to this "angel" of evil from the abyss, further helps the reader to mark the man and know the leading features and effects of his character. The presiding *genius loci*, the name of the prime-mover of this pestilent heresy—the antichristian opponent of the faith who attempted the *destruction* of all who professed it—is given intentionally, no doubt, in two languages, Hebrew and Greek,* each having the

* Hebrew, "אבדון," "Abaddon" — Greek, "Απολλων," "Apollyon."

same signification, “DESTROYER;” *the Hebrew** expressive of his hostility to the Jews, and his invading, almost with the first of his expeditions, Syria and the Holy Land of Palestine, and holding the conquest of it: the *Greek*, as proving himself the persecutor and devastator of Gentile Christians wherever they existed, through the length and breadth of Christendom. Yet, we know, this *double destroyer*, in God’s appointed time, “came to his end, and none could help him;”† and so must the whole baseless fabric of falsehood which he has left behind; and which, alas! still survives—but only for a season! “*The locusts have a king over them—the Destroyer—and he goeth to destruction: but, Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, and His kingdom shall have no end.*”‡

12.—Through the forbearance of God towards a corrupt and degenerate Church and people, the aggressive character of the Saracenic “woe” passed off, after *hurting and tormenting*, without annihilating

* It is said that a renegade Christian Jew assisted the “*false prophet*” in compiling some of the farrago of creeds and doctrines found in the Koran.

The meaning of the name in these two languages would show that Jew and Gentile—perhaps the Jew first and foremost, as *Mahomedanism tramples down Palestine to the present day*—would suffer grievously under the hands of the impostor. May this foul blot on our Christendom speedily be wiped out, in the good providence of God!

† Dan. xi. 4, 5.

‡ See Bp. Wordsworth’s “Notes;” also, Rev. xvii. 14 and xix. 16.

or destroying, the Christian faith. The Arab-power continued till the end of the tenth century; but its woe-working energy was gone.* A pause of rest ensues, as implied in the expression "one woe is past;" while "*two more*" woe-trumpets, "*hereafter*," have yet to give their sound.

Meanwhile, we may reflect upon and profit by the admonition given, from these troubles, against the danger of yielding in the least to strange and seducing doctrines, poisonous to the faith like a scorpion-sting, and destructive to truth and fruitfulness in the Church of Christ, like an invading host of locusts to the vegetation of the field. "*The men*," be it remembered, "*who had not the seal upon their foreheads*," were those singled out by God for special punishment. They were the persons very liable to the worst assaults of the infidel enemy, and most easily won upon by the attractions of a *licentious* creed.† A holy life, the

* The date, as before observed, of the intensity of the Saracenic power ceasing to disturb Europe, may be fixed A.D. 762, upon their retirement beyond the Euphrates, and the erection of Bagdad ("City of Peace") as their capital, where the caliphs resided. The Greeks, in the East, twice repelled attacks upon Constantinople, and afterwards reconquered Crete, Cyprus, Cilicia, and Antioch; while, in the West, the Moorish Saracens gave way before the rising Christian kingdoms of Spain. (See Elliott's "Hor. Apoc.")

† "The Mohammedan heaven is thoroughly *sensual* in its character, its highest pleasures and enjoyments being of a carnal description." (Dr. Gordon's "Faiths of the World.")

product of a sound and holy faith, and *spiritual worship in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, is the only test of being safe in Christ, the only seal of heavenly security in the day of adversity. Then,

*“The enemy shall not be able to do us violence,
The son of wickedness shall not hurt us!”**

A difference will ever be shown, we may be assured, even before the final day of account and of eternal separation, between the righteous and the wicked; between the true “children” and the wilful “aliens;” between the tents of Israel in Goshen and the dwellings of the idolaters in Egypt; between those who are decided in serving and honouring their God and Saviour, heart and soul, “*through evil report and good report*,” and those who start aside at the first temptation like a “broken bow,” or flee, like cowards, at the first sound of the trumpet that calls the *soldiers of Christ to the battle of faith*.

“We’re soldiers fighting for our God!
Let trembling cowards fly;
We’ll stand unshaken, firm, and fix’d
With CHRIST to live and die!
Let Satan rage, and men assail,
We’ll cut our passage through;
Let foes unite, and friends desert,
We’ll seize the crown in view!

* Ps. lxxxix. 23 (Common Prayer Book version).

"The little cloud increases still,
 The heavens are big with rain ;
 We haste to catch the teeming show'r,
 And all the moisture drain ;—
 A rill—a stream—a torrent flows,—
 But pour the mighty flood !
 O sweep the nations, shake the earth !
 Till all proclaim Thee, God !

And when Thou mak'st Thy jewels up,
 And sett'st Thy starry crown ;
 When all Thy sparkling gems shall shine,
 Proclaimed by Thee *Thine own* ;
 May we, a little band of love ;—
 We sinners, saved by grace,—
 From glory unto glory chang'd,
 Behold Thee face to face !"

REV. IX. 13—21.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET.—LOOSING THE FOUR
 BOUND ANGELS.—THE EUPHRATEAN HORSEMEN.
 —THE PREPARED TIME OF THE (TURKISH) WOE.

13.—And the sixth angel sounded, and
 I heard a voice from the four horns of the
 golden altar which is before God, 14.—
 Saying to the sixth angel which had the
 trumpet, Loose the four angels which are
 bound in the great river Euphrates.
 15.—And the four angels were loosed,
 which were prepared for an hour, and a

day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16.—And the number of the army of the horsemen, *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17.—And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18.—By these three was the third part of men killed by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19.—For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20.—And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21.—Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.

13.—A “voice”* is heard by John on the sounding of the sixth trumpet, of a uniform kind, as from each of the four corners, or “horns” of the “golden altar” of incense, on which was sprinkled some of the blood of the sin-offering, on the great day of atonement and other occasions,† and the “woe” following seems to pronounce, that the anger of Jehovah has been aroused by some great profanation or contempt of the peace-speaking blood of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of His *priestly intercession* before the mercy-seat; as if it were—

“A voice of noise from the city,

A voice from the temple,

A voice of the Lord rendering recompence to His enemies.”‡

14.—The command at once issues to “the sixth” trumpet-angel—“Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates!” These invisible agents of Omnipotence are loosed, whose “woe”-commission had been restrained—though threatened, and deserved against the guilty land—

* The Greek is “φωνὴν μίαν,” *one voice*, signifying, probably, that the purpose and command are one and the same, showing judgments determined upon by reason of similar transgressions in the *four quarters* specified by the “four horns of the altar.” This has been previously represented as standing before the most Holy Place. See Fig. and note, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

† Exod. xxx. 10; Lev. iv. 17, 18; xvi. 18.

‡ Isa. lxvi. 3—6.

during the *sealing vision* before-mentioned;* and to give time for some of the impenitent and back-sliding idolaters to repent,† through the forbearance of God, and to comfort and consolidate the faithful portion of the Church.

15.—The full tempest of war-woe and purifying trials to the professing Church is now called forth. The Euphratean angels are loosed. The trumpet-sound, proceeding from the banks of that ancient and celebrated river, falls (as previously), to a great extent, upon the *Eastern* borders of the empire.

Four principal chieftains,‡ or leaders, are

* Rev. vii. 1. During the restraining interval between the first and second “woe”-trumpets, a period of about 300 years, a great increase took place of *Mariolatry, incense-burning in the Churches, image-worship, prayers to the saints and for the dead*, with various *superstitions* respecting the nature of the *Atonement*, and the *Lord’s Supper*.

† It has been noticed, that when the Greek Emperor Leo, A.D. 717, made a public reformation in the Eastern Church, supported by the *Iconoelasts* (or *image-breakers*, as they were called,) against idol-worship, the Saracens, in their attack on Constantinople, about this time, were repulsed with shame and loss. Again, when, A.D. 754, *image-worship* was formally condemned, the empire was saved by the Saracen-power being broken. But, again, in A.D. 787, at the second Council of Nice, called together by the base Empress Irene after she had murdered her image-breaking husband, while the former decrees were annulled, *idol-worship* was restored, and afterwards fully confirmed by the Empress Theodora, in undisputed ascendancy.

‡ These were, (1), *Alp Arslan*, (the “Valiant Lion,”) who passed from Bagdad over the Euphrates, Jan. 18, A.D. 1057,

mentioned, each prepared for their work, like the battle-axe in the hands of the slayer and executioner; as the ministers of God's justice, and instruments made ready for the fulfilling of His wise and "unsearchable judgments."

These, in succession, cross the great river Euphrates, at the head of numerous Turkomen* and other cavalry, all animated with martial fury and religious phrensy against the Christian

defeated the Greek Emperor Alexius, and took him prisoner, A.D. 1063; (2) *Genghis Khan* ("King of Kings"), in 1183, at the head of 500,000 men, chiefly Mogul cavalry, attacked Saracens and Christians, involving both in a general overthrow; (3) *Ortugrul* and his son *Othman* (founder of the Ottoman dynasty), A.D. 1289, led some more tribes of Turks from Persia and parts of Scythia, between the Himalayas and the Caspian Sea where they had first settled, and, having crossed the Hellespont soon subdued the remaining provinces of the Greek empire in Europe, and invested Constantinople; and (4) *Timour*, or *Tamerlane*, the *Tartar*, from the frontiers of China, defeated the Sultan Bajazet in the great battle of Angora, A.D. 1403, thus deferring the destruction of the Greek empire and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, which took place *May 29th*, 1453, under *Mohammed II.* The first three *Crusades*, between A.D. 1095 and 1189, helped also to keep the enemy at bay for a season.

* *The Turks*, or *Seljukian Turkomen*, were of Asiatic and Scythian origin, and were first employed under *Togrul Beg* by the Caliph of Bagdad, who made him his lieutenant and secular head of Islamism. These were led by the nephew of *Togrul Beg* (*Alp Arslan*, the Valiant Lion), on a career of victory, and, with the fanatical Moslems, soon made the emperor tremble on the throne of Constantinople.

Churches and people of the Greek empire, and Europe in general.

The "*hour, day, month, and year,*" prophetically fixed for the period of the *Euphratean* or *Turkish* "woe," in order to accomplish the purpose of God on the Eastern "*third*" of the old Roman empire, are calculated with considerable accuracy, according to the rule of *a day for a year*, now generally laid down and observed in the prophetic writings, as follows:—

	Years.	Days.
" <i>The year</i> "*	365	91
" <i>The month</i> "	30	—
" <i>The day</i> "	1	—
" <i>The hour</i> " ($\frac{1}{24}$ th)	—	30
	396	121

According to the historian of the times, *Abulfeda*, the Turks quitted Bagdad, for their first passage of the Euphrates, on the day answering to our *January 18th*, 1057; and it is known that the fall of Constantinople took place on or about the 29th May, 1453; thus fulfilling† as nearly as possible—considering the difficulty of historical

* The usual word for the prophetic year of 360 days is "*καιρος*," a time. Here it is "*ενιαυτος*,"—*the complete (annual) revolution of the earth round the sun*—365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days.

† From 1057 to 1453 is 396 years; and from January 18th to May 29th is four months and eleven days—131 days. It is possible that the mystic date above may have, as is known in many prophecies, a *two-fold* fulfilment.

data from the distance of time intervening—the predicted successful operations of the Turks and others against the Eastern “*third part of the men*,” for “*the year, the month, the day, and the hour*.”

16.—John hears the large number stated of the “*horsemen*” brought against the destined empire of the Greeks. It was not from his own computation. It was announced to him as a matter worthy of being specially noted and recorded—“*myriads of myriads*.”

This very term, “*myriad*” (used in the Greek language for 10,000), seems to fix more closely the application of the prophetic terms here employed and the “*woe*”-trumpet, to the invasions of the Turks and Tartars. Among both people, we are informed, the custom prevailed of counting their armies by “*tomans*,” that is “*myriads of myriads*.”* Their amazing forces of cavalry brought into the field against the Church and empire in the East, during the 200 years, or more, embraced under this “*woe*,” may well be calculated in this manner.

17, 18.—Still more precisely to define the reference of this sixth trumpet-plague to the Turks and their *myriad*-armies, and the poisonous Mohammedan false doctrine which they spread

* (See Daubuz “*Commentary*.”) Gibbon writes of “*the myriads*” of Turkish horse, in later invasions, overspreading the Greek frontier from Taurus to Erzeroum; and of the cavalry of the earlier Turks being “*proudly counted by myriads*.”

wherever they conquered, the prophetic figures are very graphic and definite.

(1) *Their horses' heads "like lions"*—the leaders of cavalry often bearing the *lion* name; (2) *their riders' breastplates, as of "fire, jacinth, and brimstone;"* or, *red and scarlet, blue and yellow*—favourite colours, to the present day, in the *appointments* of the Turkish troops; (3) *the fire, smoke, and brimstone, from the horses' mouths*—the *gunpowder*, the recently-invented "*Greek fire*," musketry, cannon, &c.*

Great havoc, it is stated and recorded, was effected by these last new destructive implements of war, to which in a great measure, the Turks, under Mohammed II., owed their success in the siege and capture of Constantinople.†

19.—It is deserving of remark that "*the power*"

* Gibbon, also, mentions the recent invention of *gunpowder*, (that "mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal"); and, it is known, that a large *foundry for cannon* had been formed at Adrianople for the siege of Constantinople.

† *Mohammed II.*, calling himself *Hunkiar*, ("*Slayer of men*,") brought fourteen batteries of Turkish artillery, now newly applied to sieges, and pointing them against the city walls and fortifications, soon enveloped the doomed capital in a "circle of fire, smoke, and brimstone;" and, after forty days, having completed the investment (by transporting his ships across the Isthmus of Galata to the inner harbour) thirteen days later he took it, and slew its emperor (Constantine XI.), subverted the empire, and trampled its religion in the dust. (See Gibbon.) The Eastern Church was then subjugated to the Moslem Turks, and continues so, alas, *to the present day*!—We may lament, and ask, (as in Rev. vi. 10), "*How long, O Lord?*"

of the horses is specially described as residing “in their mouths* and in their tails,” which latter are compared to “serpents with heads,” and having much strength and capacity to do injury. Some have found an interpretation to this symbol in the authority of the Turkish office of *pashas*, who



were generally distinguished by the number of horse-tails attached to their banners,† and the

* The “mouths”—referred to and explained before under verse 17.

† See Fig. of Turkish Standard of three horse-tails. A Turkoman general, it is said, not knowing how to rally some

poisonous serpent-stings, which they cruelly and poisonously exercised, by the sword and by the Koran, over the poor and oppressed Christian community.

20, 21.—The prevailing sins of the age—called, rightly, “*the dark age*,” of the Christian Church, both Eastern and Western—are specified at the close of this prophetic “*woe*,” to show that God “*had not done, without cause*,” all that He had permitted, in His justice, to be done to the guilty—whose offences, even after these seven and repeated visitations, are stated, on the Divine authority, to be still, to a great degree, *unrepented of*. These are (1) “*worship of devils*,” or *demonolatry*,* *adoration of the spirits of dead men and women*, by open acts of worship, prayers, and offerings at shrines to deified (supposed) saints; (2) “*worship of idols of gold, and silver, brass, iron, and wood, or direct idolatry, and image-making for religious purposes*—the crying abomination which, in all ages, has

troops that had lost their standard in battle, cut off a horse's tail, and fixed it to the end of a spear; and the soldiers seeing this new signal recovered their courage, and gained the victory. Hence the origin of the titular dignity.

Some writers have endeavoured to explain the above (ver. 19) as applicable to a further description of the Turkish artillery drawn by horses whose tails seemed to touch the cannon's mouth!

* See 1 Tim. iv. 1—3:—“Doctrines of devils”—“*δαίμωνιων*” (not *διαβολων*)—rather to be rendered, the *deified souls* of dead persons—saints, heroes, demigods, as worshipped by pagans, and afterwards introduced into (Romish and Greek) Christianity.

excited the special indignation of Jehovah against people professing His name;* (3) "*murders*"—especially marked in *their massacre of God's saints*,† who refused to conform to their corruptions of Divine truth, and who surrendered their lives to the enemies of the pure Gospel, rather than give up the plain teaching of God's holy word and Spirit, which they held dearer to their hearts than anything in the world; (4) their "*sorceries, fornications, and thefts*"—which were notorious in the *Greek*, and unrepented of in the *Romish Church*—with pretended miracles, "*lying wonders*," "*seducing spirits*,"—legends of deceit for worldly gain; transubstantiation, purgatory, dispensations, *indulgences*; with sale of relics, for robbery of the

* See pp. 63 and 163. The second Council of Nice, as before remarked (note chap. ix. 14) A.D. 787, made it a law that "*the worship of images is agreeable to Scripture and reason, to the fathers and councils of the Church.*"—A solemn procession with an *image of the Virgin* (it is said) was made to the chief church at the siege of Constantinople, to avert the anger of the Deity—but, as might be expected, *without avail*.

† In the barbarous crusade against the *Paulicians* in the East, during the ninth century, it is computed that there perished about 100,000, and against the *Waldenses* in the West, A.D. 1215, nearly a million of souls. The "*murders*," committed in the *name of religion*, by professedly Christian Churches, at various periods, (especially by the *Roman Catholic*, as will be seen in the course of the *Apocalypse*,) are countless—they may be reckoned by *millions*! *Paulicians, Waldenses, Albigenses, Hussites, Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, Wycliffites, Protestants, Huguenots, &c.*, swell the tale of "*woes*," and rouse the tide of merited vengeance against the vile and bloodthirsty Apostasies.

weak and credulous; fees for pardons, penances, fines, pilgrimages, simony; masses for the living and dead; forced legacies to the Church, and other base, licentious, and mercenary practices too gross and numerous to be specified.*

We know how the modern Roman Catholic Church persists in these unhallowed defiant delinquencies, in open breach of God's holy word and revealed law, *to the present time*. But as she professes, by her Pope and councils, INFALLIBILITY and UNCHANGEABLENESS—two of the *incommunicable attributes* of Deity—what hope is there of her *repentance*? The spared remnant "*repented not of their works*." God has given Rome, surely, full time and space to repent; now since the fall and humbling of her twin-degenerate sister, Constantinople, upwards of 400 years; yet, still, alas! like the threatened and denounced Thyatira, "SHE REPENTETH NOT!"

Well may we sigh and lament with the prophet,† for the many iniquities perpetrated under the garb

* The extreme licentiousness (of the middle ages of the Church,) was hardly concealed by the cowl of sanctity. (Hallam.)

If you wish to see the horrors of these ages read the "*Councils*?" (Chateaubriand, one of their own writers.)

The three vices which made the greatest havoc in the Western Church (Roman), in these unhappy times were, (1) the incontinency of the clergy, (2) the outrage and pillaging of the laity, and, (3) the *simony* to which both of them were addicted. (Cardinal Fleury's "*Eccles. Hist.*")

† Lam. iii. 48; also, Ps. cxix. 136.

of religion, from time to time, in lands favoured by God with the light of revealed truth—

“ Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water,
For the destruction of the daughter of my people!”

Even the heathenism of “*men of Nineveh*” will rise up in the judgment against many in our own “generation,” for “*they repented at the preaching of Jonah,*”* but headstrong impenitence, hardness of heart, and stubborn contempt of God’s word mark the character and conduct of thousands in the professing Christian community! Threatenings or exhortations, punishments or sparings—the signal retribution or the compassionate reprieve—all God’s providential dealings, weal or woe, seem to have little or no influence upon those whose minds are determined upon blindness, and whose hearts are debased with greed of gain and blood-guiltiness. Our best resolution should be to follow the prophet’s advice—

“ Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils ;
For wherein is he to be accounted of?”†

And our straightforward course of action is to *cleave closely to Christ*, as our only safeguard against the temptation of declining either in faith or in practice. “*Stand in awe, and sin not !*” When the scorner is smitten the prudent will beware.‡ Let the “*woes*” inflicted upon apostate Churches, in past times,—upon the impenitent, the faithless,

* Luke xi. 32.

† Isa. ii. 22.

‡ Prov. xix. 25.

the cruel, the idolatrous, the licentious, the deceiving and mammon-loving—be to us as a “beacon” upon the precipitous coast or shallow and dark shore, warning where danger and destruction lie, and where wisdom and duty lead; even to the haven of peace, holiness, and safety in the Light of God’s beaming countenance from above.

“Cometh sunshine after rain,
After mourning joy again;
After heavy, bitter grief,
Dawneth surely sweet relief;—
And my soul, who from her heigh
Sank to realms of woe and night,
Wingeth now to heaven her flight

Every sorrow, every smart,
That th’ Eternal Father’s heart
Hath appointed me of yore,
Or hath yet for me in store,
As my life flows on, I’ll take
Calmly, gladly, for His sake,
No more faithless murmurs make.

I will meet distress and pain,
I will greet e’en death’s grim reign
I will lay me in the grave
With a heart still glad and brave
Whom the STRONGEST doth defend,
Whom the HIGHEST counts His friend
Cannot perish in the end !”

REV. X. 1—11.

INTERVAL BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH TRUMPETS.—THE OPEN BOOK.—THE ANGEL OF THE REFORMATION.—THE MYSTERY SOON TO END.—THE COMMAND TO TAKE THE BOOK AND PREACH.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2.—And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth, 3.—And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4.—And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5.—And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6.—And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein

are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7.—But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. 8.—And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9.—And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10.—And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11.—And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

1.—An *interval* of breathing and rest, between

successive "woes," must ever prove refreshing to the tried and weary spirit! And when that breathing-time brings the clear voice of mercy through the clouds, with the fair encircling *rainbow of peace*, in sure resource of love, the heart rebounds with hope, and expands in grateful praise! Goth and Vandal, Saracen, Turk and Tartar, are no longer present in the new bright vision before us. They give place to the view of a "*Mighty Angel*" descending from heaven to earth, canopied and girdled with a gold-tinged "*cloud*," the beautiful *Covenant*—"Iris"* around His head, His face shining like "*the sun*," and His feet beaming with the glowing splendour of "*pillars*" of *flaming* "*fire*."†

2.—In the bright "Angel's" hand is an *open book*,‡—as if newly-opened for all to read its

* The Greek is "Ἡ Ἰρις," as being a *well-known* type of God's merciful covenant with man from of old. (Rev. iv. 3.), *Note*, page 108.

† The description of the *mighty Angel's* appearance here being very much like that in Rev. i. 14—18 (which applies to Christ), we must consider Him no created angel, but the representative God-Man, Christ Jesus. (See, also, Dan. iii. 25, x. 4—6.)

‡ We need not stop to dispute about the meaning of this "*Book*," because of its size, "βιβλαγιδιον," "*little book*." We may recollect that the book, or roll, containing the whole of John's Apocalypse, is called a small one, "βιβλιον." (Rev. v. 1.) Things *small* in God's view are often found *great* in ours, and *vice versa*. The open "*book*," which has been handed down to us from the *glorious Reformation*, was doubtless foreseen as becoming *small in size* compared with the long parchment rolls and folios

precious contents. His right foot is on the “main;” His left is on the land; and He utters His mighty “voice,” as that of “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah!*”—“*The seven thunders*” forthwith respond; and the quick-rolling echoes reverberate among the seven hills.

When the “*darkness*” of ages had long covered the earth, and was in danger of overwhelming it, it pleased God to arise and take the cause into His own hands, and raise up instruments suited to His work, for the revival of true religion and the regeneration of His Church.† A poor humble monk of Germany, as he was groping among the old and dusty tomes of the monastic library, at Erfurt, discovered a volume which attracted his deepest attention and engaged his serious thought. He found what he had never seen before, “the Book” of God’s Holy Scriptures—“THE BIBLE”—written in the vulgar tongue of the

of “the fathers,” through *the happy invention of printing*—but yet, great and marvellous in its subject and contents. The art of printing was discovered about the year A.D. 1436, providentially, just in time for the work of *the Reformation*. W. Caxton, the first English printer, died about A.D. 1491.

† The way for the *Reformation*, in Germany, had been gradually prepared, by a variety of providential circumstances, (as noticed by Dr. M. D’Aubigné,) before Luther actually appeared on the scene.—“*Frederick* (of Saxony), *Reuchlin*, *Erasmus*, *Hutten*, *Cronberg*,—men of learning, princes, warriors, the Church itself—all had sapped some of the foundations of the antique colossus of Rome; but there they had stopped. The world was in expectation, and Luther appeared.”

Latin Church.* His soul, prepared by God's grace, as "*the good ground*," for the incorruptible seed, was gladdened with the perusal of the sacred word; and he grew in knowledge of its instructive histories, and in love of the Gospel's sweet and life-giving precepts. His eyes thus became opened, and the increasing light made him soon discern the corruptions of the apostasy. LUTHER rose, by the Spirit of God, with lion-like energy and power of success, to expose and counteract the death-dealing errors of *antichristian Papal Rome*.†

It had been Rome's subtle policy, for many years, to keep the Bible from the people. It is the same to the present day. She knew that her many dark and unscriptural doctrines, and proud assumptions of spiritual despotism, could not stand before the pure sun-light of God's written word. "The Romanists understood well how little the practice of their Church was supported by Scripture; and that, if *the 'ark' of the covenant* was admitted, their '*Dagon*' must fall.‡"

* Hence called the "*Vulgate*."

† It is said, that after the discovery of the treasure, "*He read, and read again; and, with mingled surprise and delight, he still returned to read. It was then that the first dawn of a truth, entirely new to him, gleamed upon his mind:—*"THE REFORMATION LAY HID IN THAT BIBLE!" (See Dr. Merle D'Aubigné's "*Hist. of Reformation*," vol. i. p. 138.)

‡ Nothing could prove a more lion-like spirit in the magnanimous heart of the great Reformer, than, (1), his fastening to the doors of the church at Wittenberg, (A.D. 1517), the

4.—Against the heroic bravery of the great Reformer,* the astonished Papal court sent forth her *anathemas and bulls of excommunication*, determined to silence, if possible, the word newly brought to light, and put an iron “veto” on the “Bible,” though newly-opened by the very “angel’s hand.” As Luther and his friends were at first disposed, with some reverential† alarm, to listen to “*the thunders of the Vatican*,” but,

celebrated “*Ninety-five Theses*,” or propositions against the chief errors of Rome, and leaving the people to read and take copies of them to circulate throughout Germany; (2), his publicly burning in the market-place the Pope’s Bull of Excommunication, and denouncing Him as *antichrist* (A.D. 1520), in the midst of a vast concourse of people; and, (3), his boldly proceeding to the great assembled Diet of Worms (A.D. 1521), in spite of the remonstrances and fears of his friends for his safety, and saying, “*Although they should make a fire that would reach from Worms to Wittenberg, and that should flame up to heaven, in the Lord’s name I would pass through it. I would appear before them, I would enter between the jaws of this Behemoth; I would break his teeth, and would confess the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

* The bulls of excommunication and anathemas of the Pope, were commonly called “*Thunders of the Vatican*.” “Just as I was looking,” said Luther, “for a *benediction*, I beheld a thunderbolt descend upon me.” “*The thunders which shook the world proceeded from the seven hills of Rome.*”—Le Bas.

† At one time Luther said he was ready to recognize these voices of thunder from Pope Leo, “*as the voice of Christ speaking in him.*” But, after further study of Scripture and teaching of the Spirit, in 1520, he replied to the successive anathemas publicly at Wittenberg, calling them “*the infernal voices of antichrist.*”

afterwards, *heeded them not*; so, when the voices of the seven thunders were first heard, John was proceeding to "*write*" what they said, but the higher voice of "*the mighty one*" forbade him, saying, "*Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not!*"

5—7.—In setting God's stern boundary and impassable barrier to the *continuance* of this antichristian Roman iniquity, which then *endeavoured* to keep the "*open book*" from being read, and *still endeavours* to do the same; there is represented to us one of the most magnificent and impressive scenes in the whole range of Apocalyptic imagery. The "*mighty Angel*," before mentioned, who was seen standing with one foot on the sea and the other on land, as *claiming for God*, against the usurpations of Rome, *universal dominion and supremacy*,* now is beheld in the most solemn and important manner imaginable, *lifting up His hand to heaven*, and, with an adjuration—in the awful name of

"THE ETERNAL AND EVER-LIVING CREATOR"
of all things in the heavens above, in the earth and sea, and beneath—declaring that *the time shall*

* By devices and paintings, and various fulsome exhibitions, the Pope (Leo X.) was represented at Rome, A.D. 1514, as *Vice-Christ* (antichrist), holding the titles and offices of Christ. On the Genoese arch he was depicted as the "*risen sun*," with a rainbow above and an inscription styling him "*King of Glory!*" On the Florentine arch he was painted as having "*one foot on the land and the other on the sea*," with a *key* in each hand as having the empire of earth, sea, and heaven.

not be much longer delayed—scarcely one (prophetic) period of time—before (and under the seventh trumpet's sounding)† the whole "mystery" of God's wonderful dealings with His Church in the present dispensation shall be completely accomplished, when the whole volume of prophecy (that lately unsealed, as well as aforetime‡) shall have its fulfilment, the end foretold shall come, and all shall be finished.*

8.—During the definite period of delay unto the end—so solemnly announced—when *the*

* The Greek is "Χρονος ουκ ετι εσται"—"There shall not be yet a 'time'" (or further). The Reformation is usually dated as beginning with the vision of the "*open Bible*," A.D. 1517—22. We may, therefore, draw some fair conclusion from this—*more distinctly, perhaps, than from many other parts of the Apocalyptic chronology*—that a precise period of 360 years shall not be allowed fully to elapse before the great consummation of *antichrist's fall*, and *Christ's enthronement* shall take place. Some, it must be mentioned, have given different interpretations to the above Greek, as if it meant, "*Time shall be no longer*," which could not reasonably apply to this period of *the vision of the Reformation-angel*; for "time" has gone on, as usual, since then, upwards of 350 years! Others have understood it as stating, "*The time is not yet*," which appears a very meagre affirmation by the angel, after being introduced with such *momentous exhibitions of importance*!

† See Rev. xviii. 20, xxii. 9; compare Josh. vi. 4, 5.

‡ Unfulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament (such as those in the Psalms of David, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, &c.) are here to be included, as well as those by Christ and His Apostles under the New; all relating, more or less, to the *overthrow* of the enemies of God's truth and the *Exaltation* of the true Church of the Bible.

mystery of God is to be finished, the “voice” of the Spirit seems to address the Church of the living God, in the person of *John*, to take the blessed treasure of the word, as if presented from the hand* of the covenant-angel, and go forward boldly, like the first Reformers, in spite of every opposition, to proclaim the “*unsearchable riches*” of the Gospel of Christ, far and near.

9, 10.—The “*little*” treasure—“*little*,” but *most precious*, when taken and pondered in the heart, digested well and prayed over, is found “*sweet as honey*,” and most pleasant to the spiritual taste; though the result of its *converting and chastening* influence within, as well as the conflict and trial to which it may expose and subject the tender spirit of the believer from the world and Satanic foes without, are often found painful and “*bitter*” in many respects.†

* Luther, in referring to his ordination, used to say, “I received the Gospel not from the hand of man, but of Christ.” At the ordination of the clergy of the Protestant Church of England, a copy of the Holy Scriptures is put into the hand of each by the bishop, saying, “Take thou authority to preach the word of God and read the Gospel.”

† The *treasure of the word* is a term that may be rightly applied to the “*little book*” of the New Testament especially, the pages of which contain so much of the revealed “*Mystery of God*,” in redemption by Christ Jesus; described as (1 Tim. iii. 16), “*God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory*.” The sweetness of the word is described by the

11.—“The little *book*,” taken and opened at the Reformation of the sixteenth century, was not to lie idle; but to do a great work in the Church of God, by dispelling the darkness of ignorance and superstition, and causing the true light to shine far and wide. The Church is commanded to take the torch, and hold it up on high in the *preaching of the word*—boldly, faithfully, unflinchingly—again, as it was so well begun, “*before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*”*

Psalmist in its wholesome precepts, testimonies, promises, &c.—

“More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold!
Sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb!
Moreover, by them is thy servant warned,
And in keeping of them there is great reward.”

(Ps. xix. 7—11; also, cxix. 9, 11, 24; and Job xxiii. 12.) The *bitterness* is also mentioned by prophets as referring figuratively (1), to believer’s afflictions in the world; (2), to the “*godly sorrow*” which works out repentance; and (3), to the many and deserved denunciations of judgment which it brings upon *haters of the truth, opposers, and persecutors*. See Ezek. ii. 8—10; iii. 1—3, 14; Jer. xv. 15—18.

* It is interesting to note the *gradual progress* of Scripture light in the good Providence of God, whose hand was constantly manifested in the work. (1), *Wycliffe*, with his “*little Tracts*,” as they were called—portions in English of God’s holy word—and his preaching against the corruptions of Rome (about A.D. 1360), was called, “*the morning star of the Reformation*,” (2), *Tyndal* proceeded with the New Testament, 1525, and the Old, 1529, to the loss of his life by Papist persecutors at Augsburg, A.D. 1530; (3), *Luther* translated the whole into vernacular German, A.D. 1522, at “*a most important epoch of the*

The Bible, henceforward, becomes the sole rule of faith and text-book of doctrine, the touchstone of truth and error, and standard of first and final appeal, in all the *Protestant Churches*, wherever they have been planted; in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, England, or America; among “peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” And the *preaching** of the Gospel, according to the word of God, with the grand doctrine, *distinctive of a standing or falling Church*,† as its central and polar orb, *justification of the sinner by faith in Christ and His righteousness*, was the great weapon wielded by the new heralds of peace, upon the mountains of Zion,‡ proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation,

Reformation.” (Dr. M. D’Aubigné.) *The Bible*, in whole or in part, now rendered into more than 230 languages and dialects, is printed by *millions*, almost every year, so that *a good copy can be procured from the British and Foreign Bible Society, or from the Christian Knowledge Society, for sixpence!* Truly, we may exclaim, “*What hath God wrought!*”—

“Their line is gone out through all the earth,

And their words to the end of the world.” (Ps. xix. 4.)

See also Christ’s last command to His Church, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15—20.

* *Prophesying* (as in ver. 11) is no other, in a general Christian senso, than *preaching*. The prophets, of old, were often the only preachers. To “*prophesy*,” is to *speck or preach in the name of God*.

† The essential Protestant and Scriptural doctrine of *justification by faith only* (Art. XI. Church of England), was well called by the Reformers—

“*Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ.*”

‡ See Isa. lii. 7—9.

through a crucified Redeemer, to all who would come and be saved—

“The Lord gave the word!

Great was the company of those that published it;

Kings of armies did flee apace:

And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.”*

Like the beacon-fires in days of yore, lighted up from peak to peak, to warn of approaching danger from the enemy, or tell some gladdening news to friends, the Gospel-flame ran with lightning-speed from place to place,† denouncing the deadly errors of Rome, and the bitter judgments consequent upon her impenitence; while its light and warmth of love cheered all orders and conditions of men, who would “come out and be separate, and touch

* Ps. lxxviii. 11, 12. Such faithful and able preachers and heralds of the Reformation were, on the Continent, Luther, Zuingle, Bucer, Æcolampadius, Calvin, Bullinger, Peter Martyr, &c.; and, in our own Protestant Britain, Rogers, Hooper, Ridley, Cranmer, Latimer, John Knox, and a host of worthies, who counted it all joy to testify “the Gospel of the grace of God,” in the face of the world.

† In Saxony, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Pomerania, Livonia, Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland, England, Ireland, and Scotland, the light made great progress, through the circulation and preaching of the pure Gospel. “Then,” says Milton, “was the sacred Bible sought out from dusty corners; Divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues. Princes and cities trooped apace to the newly-erected banner of salvation; martyrs, with the irresistible might of weakness, shook the powers of darkness, and scorned the fiery rage of the old red dragon.” (Quoted in *Le Bas’ ‘Life of Wycliffe,’* ch. vi. p. 241.)

not the unclean thing," that the God of the Bible might receive them, and they might become "*sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.*"

Let the sacred Scriptures ever be taken as our best companion, guide, support, and comfort! Let them be esteemed by us as our most enduring treasure! O, may we "*search*" them constantly by the "Holy Spirit's" seven-fold light; then we cannot but find the way to "eternal life!" And, while they prove to the unbelieving and despisers, *bitter as wormwood*, a "*savour of death unto death*," they shall be to the humble, the willing, and obedient, a "*savour of life unto life*;" sweeter to the soul than "honey and the honeycomb," and more desirable than "thousands of gold and silver!"

"Behold, the word of God shall stand

Unchanged, unchanging still!

Whilst the vicissitudes of time

Their destined course fulfil.

But, as the silver in the fire,

Sustains a seven-fold glow,

Then shines in brightness, thus we wait

The work of grace to know!

The cross this work of grace performs,

And bids the nations see

The Lord our "strength and righteousness,"

Our light and liberty!

Who shines in all His radiance forth,

And shows the astonished lands His Radiance and His Worth!"

REV. XI. 1—14.

THE TEMPLE COURTS AND MEASURING REED.

—TWO WITNESSES, PROPHESYING.—BEAST OUT OF THE PIT.—WITNESSES SLAIN, REVIVING, ASCENDING.—TENTH PART OF THE CITY FALLEN.
—PASSING AWAY OF THE SECOND WOE.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and them that worship therein. 2.—But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot *and* two months. 3.—And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4.—These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth. 5.—And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6.—These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of

their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7.—And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8.—And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9.—And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10.—And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11.—And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12.—And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud;

and their enemies beheld them. 13.—And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14.—The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

1.—A “*reed*,” like a “*rod*” or staff of office,* is given to John, appearing in the temple above as expositor of the Divine purposes to the Church on earth; with a direction from the “angel” (ch. x.) that he should “*rise*,” and measure the courts of the Lord’s house, with particular regard to the true “*worshippers*,” and the “*holy place*,” where stood the “*altar*” of God.†

2.—The “*outer court*”‡ was to be left out in the

* “*Καλαμος*,” *reed* for measuring; “*ῥαβδος*,” “*staff*,” signifying authority and power. The former is the word often used for “*pen*,” which was one of the great weapons of the Reformers against Roman errors, and in defence of the truth. See for measuring “*reed*,” or line, Jer. xxxi. 38, 39; Ezek. xl. 3—5, &c.; Zech. ii. 3.

† See View of the general outline of the Temple-Courts. “*Altar*,” “*θυσιαστηριον*,” may signify the altar of burnt-offering, where atonement was made for sins, as well as the altar of incense near the veil.

‡ “*τοὺς ἔξω*,” “*those outside*,” or without grace in the heart, like Gentiles in the outer court, without any participation in the privileges of descent from Abraham; the unconverted, and such as seem alluded to in Mark iv. 11; 1 Cor. v. 12.

COURT OF THE GENTILES.

C^T OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

PRIESTS & LEVITES.



MOST HOLY PLACE.

SANCTUARY.



BRAZEN SEA.



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING.

PRIESTS & LEVITES.

C^T OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

COURT OF THE GENTILES.

COURT OF THE GENTILES.

COURT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

PRIESTS & LEVITES.

PRIESTS & LEVITES.

COURT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

COURT OF THE GENTILES.

authoritative measurement for God, since it was given to a people (nominally worshippers) called "*Gentiles*;" bearing the same relation to the chosen "*children of God*" and His service, as proselytes of old to the true "*Israel*" and the inner courts of the temple. These, however, have it in their power to "*tread down*" and oppress the true Church, the "*holy city*," for "*forty-two* (prophetic) *months*;" or, as explained afterwards (ver. 3), "*1,260 days*" of years.*

3.—During this marked period,† the witnessing Church and ministry of God—spoken of as "*two*," from the legal number of witnesses required in a court of justice for the *evidence of conviction*—will

* These dates being put in two forms may, probably, refer to somewhat distinct matters; (1) *the treading down of the Church*, and (2) *the prophesying in sackcloth*. It may be seen that prophetic months are to be taken in round numbers of *thirty days* each, and that the things repeated are certain to take place, and fixed as to time.

† The beginning, or starting point for these prophetic dates, has had various interpretations. We shall have to touch upon this *treading down* in another place (xii. 14, and xiii. 5). The *prophesying in sackcloth* must mean, *some great suppression of the truth*; and, as this ceases (ver. 12) in *its great elevation*, called *the ascension of the witnesses*, we cannot do better in finding the starting point, than *date back* from that *elevation* of Gospel principles, 1,260 years. Now, we cannot say that Protestantism was properly freed from danger, and established in power and on a firm basis in Europe, till the defeat of the *Great Armada* in 1588; and A.D. 328 gives us the first great (Church) opposition to the faith in the rise of Arianism and the expulsion of Athanasius.

have power given them from above* to *preach the pure Gospel*; though in a measure despised, and from an inferior position, and mourning condition, like persons "*clothed in sackcloth*." Yet, though oppressed and down-trodden by man, they are highly honoured of the Lord; being compared to "*the two olive-trees*," and "*the two candlesticks*" of the sanctuary, dispensers of holy unction and sacred light from Him, and "*standing before the God of the earth*."†

5, 6.—The witnesses for Christ and the faithful preachers of the word, have never failed, or been found wanting, in preserving and testifying the truth of God in the darkest times.‡ "*Power*" has been given them (ver. 3), and they have not refused, but rejoiced, to exercise it. The "*words*" of God in their mouth have been as the very elements of fire, air, and water, made subservient to the purposes of heaven, for the convincing of believers and the confounding of opponents. Like

* The words from the angel, "*I will give power unto my two witnesses*," prove, (1) that the mighty angel speaking, (ch. ix. 1) really represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) that the witnessing is *for Him*, and for the truth of His saving doctrine in the Gospel.

† The "*olive*," or oil-tree, common in Palestine, supplied the holy oil for the temple (p. 54), and "*the candlestick*" has been noticed before as the Church's pure light (Rev. xviii. 19, 21), the sacred symbol of *Truth and Grace*. Zech. iv. 11—14.

‡ See reference to the sufficiency of *two* as witnessing for the truth, John viii. 17, and Deut. xvii. 6. This part of the vision having reference to the *witnesses* for Christ, is considered to have

Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Peter, the *two witnesses* have boldly testified, and often with miraculous effect. Many have been “*hewed*” and “*slain*” by the word;* the stubborn, and ignorant, have been unable to withstand the *wisdom* with which they spake,† and the malignant and malicious have felt the weight of the “*vengeance*” with which God has repaid the injury done to His servants. Evils and calamities, no doubt, have attended mankind, individually and collectively, more than at present known to us, from the daring hostility and shameful contempt shown towards the faithful ministering witnesses of Gospel truth.‡

some retrospective meaning, even as far back as Pope Sylvester’s time, before mentioned (about A.D. 328); when, on account of the growing pride of the Church, and the anticipated development of the apostasy of Rome, a separation was made by a society determined to preserve the simplicity of the apostolic faith, out of which sprang the two Churches of the *Vallenses* in Piedmont, and the *Albigenses*, in France (see Faber). Bishop Newton observes that, in the darkest periods of Popery, some superior spirits remained to bear testimony against it, and stem the torrents of superstition like lights in a dark place, remonstrating against the degeneracy and superstition of the times. And even Gibbon observes, after naming the persecutions of the Albigensis:—“In the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology.”

* Jer. i. 9, 10; v. 12, 14; also Exod. vii. 17; 1 Kings xv ii. 1
1 41; Hosea vi. 5.

† Acts vi. 8—10; also 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

‡ See Rev. xvi. 6. It has been proved, from history, that

7.—Towards the close of the period of their predicted testifying in a depressed condition (as if “*in sackcloth*”) for 1,260 years, the *Popish anti-christ*—represented here, for the first time, under the *beast out of the abyss*,* as having obtained new and aggrandised power over earthly sovereignties, secular and spiritual—“*makes war*” with deadly inquisitorial hatred, and determined wild-bestial fury against them, to destroy, if possible, every vestige of their *protesting* name from the Roman earth and the visible Church.

8.—The sworn enemy of the witnesses is permitted to prevail for a season against them. Their public testimony is silenced; their “schisms and heresies,” as Rome designated their sound principles and scriptural doctrines, are *proclaimed to be extirpated*† at the great Lateran council of the

many most disastrous plagues, pestilences, wars, famines, &c., were felt in the Roman empire during the worst periods of Popish domination and persecution. The “Magdeburg Centuriators,” and Fox’s “Martyrology,” give accounts of “blood” with which their testimony was sealed.

* “*θηριον*,” “*wild beast* ;” “*ἐκ τῆς Αβυσσου*,” “*out of the bottomless pit*,” hell; whence, also, the “*wormwood*” *antichrist* (Mohammedan). Rev. ix. 1, 2. Luther states, “When I was in Rome (in 1510) it was a common proverb, ‘If there was a hell, Rome was built upon it, as an abyss from which all sins emanated.’”

† An orator at the council declared, “Now none appeals! None opposes!” (then turning to the Pope) “*all is seen subject to thee throughout the whole range of Christendom!*” Rome (Papal) had gradually increased her power (1) from the great donations.

Church, A.D. 1514, as if their "*dead bodies*" really lay unburied in the street of the great city called ("*spiritually*" and significantly) *Sodom or Egypt*, or the Jerusalem - Golgotha, "*where our Lord was crucified.*"

9, 10.—For "*three years and a half*" their "*dead bodies*" seemed to be "*unburied,*" reckoning from the date of the great council at which the above proclamation was boastingly made;* and, meanwhile, the knowledge of this fact was spread among "*people, kindred, tongues and nations,*" in all quarters; the assembled princes and prelates, separated from the council with complacency and confidence; mutual congratulations on the peace,

early in the fourth century, given to the Church under Constantine the Great; (2) from the edict of the Emperor Justinian, A.D. 553, granting her episcopal supremacy over all Churches; (3) under the Emperor Phocas another decree, confirmatory of the above, A.D. 606; (4) in Gregory II.'s time, A.D. 727, when the Romish Church acted independently of the Greek emperor, and, soon after (A.D. 754), had *temporal* sovereignty from Pepin, the *Exarchate of Ravenna*; (5) under Charlemagne (A.D. 790—800), when the *Western imperial title and dominion* were revived, and the emperor and kings submitted to receive their crowns from the Pope. At the date of the extermination of the *witnessing-heresies* so-called, A.D. 1514, Rome (Papal) proudly styled herself, "Universal Queen over Empires, Kingdoms, and Churches!" See Rev. xvii. 2, 13, 18.

* The council took place in the Church of the Lateran, at Rome, May 5th, 1514; and, *three years and a half* after that memorable epoch of Rome's exultation, Luther nailed his celebrated "*Ninety-five Theses,*" in exposure and defiance of Rome's usurpation and iniquity, upon the gates of the church at

unity, and purity of the Church, were lavishly exchanged between legates, cardinals, priests, and orators, making merry like persons freed from a great torment.

11.—But, at the end of this time, the testimony, which had been forcibly suppressed,* awoke with new vigour, as if animated with the very breath and Spirit of God, who caused the (seeming) corpses, so greedily gloried over for a time, to rise from their depressed state as predicted of the scattered bones of the house of Israel, in the future restoration to their land and to their Messiah, “*to stand upon their feet,*” and become “*an exceeding great army.*”†

Wittenberg, on the eve of All Saints' Day (October 31st), 1517. The being “unburied” may mean (1) *literally*, that *heretics* (as the witnesses were called) were debarred from Christian interment; and (2) in a *figurative* sense, their testimony was not thoroughly *extinct*, for it was only as in a night—“*Sleep,*” soon to awake and arise.

* “At this time,” says Mr. Cuninghame, “the lethargy of the age was such that Europe reposed in the deep sleep of spiritual death, under the iron-yoke of the Papacy.” “*There was none,*” as it were, “*that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or spoke.*” (Isa. x. 12). The Waldenses had been warred down, their towns and villages laid in ruins; the Bohemian “Brethren” were stunned by the massacre of Huss and Jerome. The ravages of war were almost outdone by the horrors of the Inquisition. “Everything was quiet, *every heretic was exterminated*, and the whole Christian world supinely acquiesced in the enormous absurdities inculcated by the Romish Church.” (“Encyclopædia Britannica.”)

† Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10.

This was fulfilled, as we have seen,* in the appearance of the great Reformers of the Church in the sixteenth century, who boldly lifted up their voices against the Papacy, as the great apostasy, and denounced corrupt Rome as the Apocalyptic Babylon; separating from her communion; ascending to a state of influence in the religious and political community, and causing dismay and alarm for the safety of their craft among all the abettors of the abominations of antichrist, that “*great conspiracy against the Gospel and the liberties of mankind.*”†

12.—It seemed to John like the direct interposition of the Most High, when a “great voice” is heard in the vision from the “mighty Angel,” saying to the witnesses, “*Come up, hither!*” and, when in the very “*cloud*” which enveloped the Covenant-Angel, as the canopy of His power, they ascended in safety and honour to the superior

* See Rev. x. 1—7. A remarkable expression of *Pope Hadrian*, A.D. 1523, is recorded, verifying the bold figure used of the revival of the witnesses in this prophecy, “The heretics Huss and Jerome are alive again in the person of Martin Luther.”

† See a useful manual called, “*Handbook of Popery*,” by Dr. Begg, where this expression is used, p. 47. It may be mentioned here, that some writers have given a date for the figurative death and resurrection of the witnesses somewhat in advance of the above (A.D. 1514 and 1517), with reference to the successful rising among the Vaudois of *Henri Arnaud*, between A.D. 1685 and 1689.

heavens in the very presence of their astonished adversaries.*

This may prove most clearly to the whole Church, as it is intended, that it was the mighty “voice” of our covenant-keeping God—and that alone—which brought new spiritual life at this critical juncture, into the decayed and dismembered witnessing body of His children. It was “the Lord’s own doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” When Popery had attained her greatest power, then was the knell sent forth of her predicted downfall. When Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, in the height of his pride and haughtiness of heart, “Is not this great Babylon that I

* The resurrection and ascension of the witnesses is verified in the wonderful success attending the valiant course of opposition raised by the Miner’s son, the poor monk of Erfurt, against all the vain thunderings of the Vatican and the martial array of the Emperor (Charles V.) of Germany. The word went forward, ran, and was glorified; while the greatest fear pervaded Roman Catholic countries, when they could not but see and own the hand of God against them, with Protestantism growing, ascending, and prospering in defiance of all their efforts to hinder it. The capture and sacking of Rome by a German, Italian, and Spanish army (A.D. 1527), and the taking of the Pope prisoner, caused the most intense alarm. Again, the Protestants under Maurice of Saxony made war upon Charles V. (A.D. 1552), and compelled him to flee for his life. Lastly, the *dispersion of the boastful Spanish Armada*, which was intended to reinstate Popery throughout Europe by the conquest of England (A.D. 1588), produced affright amongst the saint-worshippers, but drew praise and *glory to the God of Heaven* from “the witnesses.”

have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" "There fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; "*The kingdom is departed from thee!*"* The friends of despotism could not raise a barrier to stand against the mighty on-flowing torrent of Bible-truth, proclaiming "*liberty to the captives.*" The gates of the Gaza of the Philistines could not resist the brawny arms of the Samson of Protestantism, endued with supernatural strength by the mighty "angel of the Reformation."

Let us not be backward in acknowledging the hand, the voice, the Spirit of God on the side of His true Church, in all her dangers! Particularly may we mark it as regards our own beloved country, England, and the sound Protestant branch of the universal Church still maintained and flourishing amongst us—(*floreat semper!*). In the following clause we see great reason to recognise the Divine goodness, as specially applicable to ourselves—

13.—The "*tenth part of the great city,*" or community professing Roman Catholicism in Europe, is said to fall from its connection with the apostasy, in the elevation of the witnesses and the discomfiture of their enemies under the great "earthquake" of the Reformation. England,

* Dan. iv. 30, 31.

comprising about one-tenth of the kingdoms of the imperial Papacy,* threw off entirely the shackles of the Pope, A.D. 1534; and besides ourselves seven "*chiliads of names*," or seven distinguished German states and provinces† of the Continent, joined with us in asserting their "civil and religious liberties," against the foul tyranny and soul-destroying despotism of Rome.

14.—The second, or Turkish woe, is declared to have now reached its culminating point, and the third woe is quickly to come.

Let us be prepared to hope for the future, as we lift up our hearts in gratitude for the past. And

* The *ten kingdoms* of the Papacy will be explained under chapter 13.

† *Of men seven thousand*," is, in the literal Greek, "*ονοματα ανθρωπων επτα χιλιαδες*," seven chiliads, or Names—distinguished orders, states, or provinces.—See Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6; also Zech. ix. 7.—Chiliarchs—governors, principedoms. These are enumerated as the seven principal Protestant States of Germany which formally joined the league of *Smalcald* (A.D. 1530), throwing off all adherence to Rome, and so, figuratively, "*slain*"—

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Elector of Saxony. | 4. Elector of Brandenburg. |
| 2. Landgrave of Hesse. | 5. Duke of Wittenberg. |
| 3. Duke of Lunenburg. | 6. Duke of Brunswick. |

And, 7. Prince of Anhalt.

The name of Protestant first arose from this *league*, and properly means, *witnessing for the truth of Christ, and against antichrist*. Elliott, and some others, make the "7,000" names refer to the seven Dutch united provinces of the Netherlands, separated and freed from Spain, A.D. 1609, from which arose the Protestant Republic of Holland.

let us not fail to give *glory to the God of heaven*, as a spared and faithful *remnant*, remaining faithful to our trust; holding and maintaining the true



character of His witnesses—the anointing grace of the Holy Spirit, and the unmistakable and steady light of truth and righteousness *shining in the darkness!**

“No tyrant enemy shall dare
 Oppress my soul while Christ is there
 The cheering influence of His word,
 Shall needful grace and strength afford!
 Full arm'd the furious foe may come,
 But he awaits his final doom!
 The time is near, and swift his fall
 Before the mighty CONQUEROR of all!

* See Candlestick and device of Waldensian Church, with motto, “*Lux lucet in tenebris.*”—“The light shineth in darkness.”

“Like some fair tree with waters fed,
That lives and thrives by fertile mead.
Secured against the traitor's sword,
Within the temple of the Lord!
My soul shall flourish, and success,
Her every work of faith shall bless
While drinking deep of Jesu's love,
And God, my Father, smiling from above!”

REV. XI. 15—19.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET BEGINS TO SOUND.—
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COMING REIGN OF
CHRIST.—THE ELDERS' WORSHIP.—THE TEMPLE
OPENED.—NEW ALARMING VISIONS PREPARA-
TORY TO THE GREAT JUDGMENT.

15.—And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16.—And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17.—Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art

to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18.—And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19.—And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

15.—The sounding of the “*Seventh Trumpet*” quickly introduces the “*third woe*,”* and, prepares for “the end;” conveying in its momentous final blast the winding up of “*the mystery of God*;”† under which glorious epoch it is proclaimed to the world, in loud celestial voices, “*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ*,” and

“HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!”

* See Rev. xv. and xvi. Between the *first* woe (Gothic) and the *second* (Turkish), there was an interval of about *two hundred* years; but, between the second and third, only about *seventy* years.

† See Rev. x. 6, 7.

16.—Immediately upon this great event being proclaimed that it was close at hand, the Church, represented in her *triumphant state* by the “twenty-four elders” sitting on thrones “*before God*,” rises in adoring gratitude, and with prostration of lowly worship before the Lamb,* hymning their praises, saying,—

17.—“We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
Which art, and wast, and art to come!
Because Thou hast taken unto Thee Thy great power,
AND HAST REIGNED!”

The fact is announced as if *fully accomplished*; since, in the mind of God, and in the contemplation of His redeemed, “*the spirits of the just made perfect*” before the throne, all God’s purposes as they proceed to their final and speedy completion are looked upon with the far-seeing eye of prophecy, as *certain and already fulfilled*.

18.—Yet, with the prospect of impending and preparatory *vials of woe and indignation* upon the obstinate apostasy and the impenitence of professing Christendom, before the great Judgment and Recompence, they add—

“The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged;
And that Thou should’st give reward unto Thy servants
the prophets,
And to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name,
both small and great;
And shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth.”

* This ascription is doubtless to the Second Person of the

19.—“*The Temple of God*” above, upon the model of which the Jerusalem-Church below is fashioned and constituted,* is now seen by the apostle opened more clearly to view, before the completion of the “mystery of God” and the “last loud” blast; when

“The Seventh Trumpet’s wondrous sound
Shall through the rending tombs resound,
And wake the sleepers underground!”

“*The ark of the Testament*,” the mercy-seat of *Jehovah*, is observed more plainly than ever revealed;† because now, as the series of visions draw

Blessed Trinity, as the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of Redemption. The expression, “*Who art, and wast, and art to come*,” though applied also to the Father, is a frequent Apocalyptic attribute of the Son of God. See Rev. i. 4, 8—13; ii. 8; iv. 8; xvi. 5; xxi. 6; xxii. 13—16.

* Heb. viii. 1—5; ix. 2, 3. Some think that as the Temple of God above generally symbolizes in these visions the true Church of Christ below, the opening of this to clearer view, before the blast of the seventh trumpet is ended, may refer to some retrospective and collateral illustrations of the “sealed book,” “*written within and without*” (Rev. v. 1), having regard more to doctrines and principles than to external constitution and history.

† “*A door opened in heaven*,” (Rev. iv. 1) or, “*the Temple of the Testimony opened*,” (Rev. xv. 5) or, as it is expressed here (ver. 19), have each a very similar meaning of *clearer views being obtained* in a spiritual and prophetic sense. These come, from the course of events or otherwise, by the light of the Spirit of God upon the minds of believers and the teachings of the Church; the increased and discreet study of unfulfilled prophecy; the general agreement on the subject of the glory of

towards the great consummation, the purposes of God in redemption become more manifestly developed to His worshipping children and prophesying servants. They can see more clearly now, and proclaim more forcibly and distinctly the mercy of God to His covenanted people, *in the glorious second Advent and Kingdom of Christ*, as well as the certainty of the approaching retributive judgments which must fall upon every malignant opponent and proud adversary.

As a mark that these portentous truths *will not be delayed* in their fulfilment, and that the Majesty of Eternal Justice and Wisdom is engaged to vindicate the honour of His mighty Name, and avenge the cause of His injured Church and insulted saints in the earth, there are seen and heard those well-known *tremendous signs* of His power in the visible heavens and terrestrial elements—

“LIGHTNINGS, AND VOICES, AND THUNDERINGS,
AND EARTHQUAKE, AND GREAT HAIL!”

Let us unite in spirit with the redeemed above, in giving glory to God for the hastening on of the

Christ and the triumph of His Church. The fall of Babylon, the judgment of the unbelieving, and the millennial reign, with the restoration of the Jews and the evangelizing of the whole world, will show that “*the Temple of God being opened in heaven*,” and the appearance in the foreground of “*the Ark of the Tabernacle*,” are not figures without their peculiar significance and appropriateness in bright seasons of Christian progress.

accomplishment of His gracious and wise purposes of love to His chosen Church, and of vindicating the honour of His holy Name in the overthrow of His bitter and presumptuous enemies.* The prospect given us, of “the kingdoms of this world” speedily becoming “the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,” ought to awaken in the heart of every child of God and heir of glory the liveliest joy and gratitude. God has pledged His word for it, and it must be done. He hath spoken it, Who is able to perform, and Whose will must stand good to all generations. Satan may yet, for a time, claim to be “*the prince of this world*,”† and to give the kingdoms, as *his*, to “*whomsoever he pleases*,”‡ even to *the antichrist*. But this cannot be long tolerated. The time is fast advancing to its

* It is worthy of particular notice, that the whole tenour of Christianity, our Lord’s own teaching and practice, as well as the writings and acts of His apostles, completely discountenances all worldly ambition, temporal sovereignty, and despotic assumption of authority such as that exercised by the Romish Church and her adherents. See Matt. xi. 29, 30 ; xx. 25, 28 ; John xviii. 36 ; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 24 ; 1 Peter v. 2, 3. Its Author was “*meek and lowly of heart*,” and went about continually doing good. His leading object was the salvation of men’s souls, and he expressly declared “His kingdom was not of this world ;” and all the apostles were marked by the same characteristics, without a hint in their writings that they were to aspire to earthly dominion, or shut up the Word and supersede the Authority of God. (See Dr. Begg’s “Handbook of Popery.”)

† John xii. 31 ; xiv. 30 ; xvi. 11. ‡ Luke iv. 5, 6.

predicted end. “The kingdoms” are already seen by the eye of faith to be “the Lord’s,” and the crown is already alighting upon and adorning His sacred brow, and even now, it may be said—

“The government is upon His shoulder,
And His name is called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR,
THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER,
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.”*

Let past mercies, in manifold tokens from on high, hold out a good assurance to us of rich blessings in store for the future. “He who hath begun the good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The nations (of the unbelieving) may be angry; and Satan may come down with great wrath, when he sees that his time for mischief is short. But “the Lord on high is mightier,” and can still, in a moment, the raging of the sea and the madness of the people; as He once smote the proud Armada of Spain, and their fleet sank “like lead” in the midst of the waters, at the very time when Rome thought to recover her lost hold on the religious liberties of Europe.

“*He blew with His winds and they were scattered.*”†

* Isa. ix. 6.

† A.D. 1588, as before remarked. The account given by an annalist of the times is, that Queen Elizabeth went in state to St. Paul’s Cathedral to return public thanks to Almighty God for the signal overthrow of the Armada, and she had a medal struck in commemoration, with the inscription as mentioned above. (See Exod. xv. 5—10.)

So we know He can, and will do again, when the needful crisis of danger arrives. When the enemy comes in like a flood, He will arise, and lift up a mighty standard of confusion against him, and glory shall be given, as of old, to

HIS BLESSED AND HOLY NAME.

“My Father’s house on high,
Home of my soul, how dear
At times to faith’s far-seeing eye,
Thy golden gates appear !

Ah ! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love ;
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above !

Yet clouds will intervene,
And all my prospect flies ;
Like Noah’s dove, I flit between
Rough seas and stormy skies.

Anon, the clouds depart,
The winds and waters cease ;
While sweetly o’er my gladden’d heart,
Expands the “bow” of peace.

I hear at morn and even,
At noon and midnight hour,
The choral harmonies of heaven,
Earth’s Babel-tongues o’erpow’r !”

REV. XII. 1-6.

THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN.—THE RED DRAGON.

THE WOMAN'S CHILD.—CAUGHT UP TO GOD.—
THE WOMAN'S FLIGHT.—HER PLACE, SUPPORT,
AND APPOINTED TIME.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars : 2.—And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3.—And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4.—And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5.—And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6.—And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they

should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.



1.—What a splendidly-beautiful object is next presented to the wondering sight of the entranced St. John, while he views depicted on the unfolding

prophetic *roll** the figure of the *sun-clothed woman*, having the silvery *moon* for her sandals, and a coronet of *twelve* bright stars upon her head! "This can be no other," would he not say within himself, "than the very Spouse of Christ, clothed with His glorious righteousness, treading all inferior and borrowed honours of the world beneath her feet, and having for her diadem and head-ornament the grand apostolic doctrines of the Gospel!"†

In this new instructive picture the Church of God is represented to us, as if by an accumulation of incontrovertible evidence, with the "*sun of righteousness*" for her best and most beauteous apparel of *justification*, and the essential doctrines of the "*twelve stars*" of the articles of her sound creed," pre-eminent in her Christian faith; with

* It is supposed by Elliott, &c., that these digressive chapters (xii., xiii., xiv.) delineate matters concerning the Church as seen on the *external portion* of the roll, and running parallel with preceding chapters on the inner portion. It pleases the great Revealer of secrets to teach His people prophetic truths, under a variety of instructive forms and figures—"here a little and there a little," "*precept upon precept*," for the inculcation of saving doctrine and the exposure of Satan's devices; thus proving, at once, the fecundity of the resources of Divine wisdom, and the unceasing purpose of infinite mercy to win to belief by the loveliness of the truth, and alarm out of sin and error by the odiousness of its dragon-form, and the sure destructive consequences of its evil course.

† The Articles of the "Apostles' Creed" are formed into *twelve*, most likely with reference to the *twelve apostles* of our Lord. The "*moon under her feet*," has been thought also to

renunciation of the world, and all its pomps and vanities and lusts of the flesh; with her fair path of conduct and course of purity and peace.

The wise and chaste Spouse of Christ is brought before us here,* in retrospect from the time of her espousals, to contrast most favourably her fair fame, faithful conjugal duty, appropriate dress and adornments, with *another woman*, of a very different origin, aspect, and character, to be hereafter portrayed;† for the warning and exhortation of the people of God, and kings and nations of the earth; to distrust, discard, and shun the one as a deadly scourge and counterfeit, disgrace and pest of the Christian community; while the other is to be regarded, honoured, and praised as the very model of God's own choosing and depicting—

“THE VIRTUOUS AND EXCELLENT WOMAN,
WHOSE PRICE IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES!”‡

represent something like the *crescent sandals* worn by ladies of the East, and of beautiful *silvery light*. If this be the meaning, that figure would betoken peace, tranquillity, beauty of walk, and peaceful course; like the “sweet moonlight” of a calm and clear night, or as the “*feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*.” Ephes. vi. 15; see, also, Canticles vi. 1.

* Chapters xii. to xv. form a digression of comparison between the *true Church and the false*, and a kind of interlude between the first blast of the “*seventh trumpet*” (ch. xi. 15) and the “*seven vials of wrath*” (ch. xvi. 1), which complete the “*mystery of God*” in His punishment of “*Great Babylon*” (ch. xvi. 17—21, and xvii. and xviii.) † See ch. xvii. 4—6.

‡ Prov. xxxi. 10—31. Nearly the whole of the description here given may bear a religious as well as a moral meaning.

2.—This “*sun-clothed woman*,” representing the true (*New Testament*) Church, espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ,* may date her “mystical union” to her Lord from the first grand constitution of the company of believers into a body (called “The Church”) at Pentecost and shortly afterwards, when 3,000 souls were brought to Christ under the first miraculous effusion of the Spirit, converted to the faith, and baptized; when, also, great numbers were “added to the Church daily of such as should be saved, and the “multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.”†

But, after a time, as she moved among a contentious, unbelieving, and disobedient world, she had to pass through seasons of great pain and affliction, with opposition and persecution from the (heathen) kings of the earth, rulers, and people, raging and “taking counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.”‡ She was, in a manner, as a woman “in travail,” and looking anxiously forward to the “time of her deliverance.”

In Canticles, also, the Bride of Christ, or His true espoused Church, is spiritually represented—

“She looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners!” (Cant. vi. 6, 10.)

These figures of speech have been used by the prophets. (See Isa. lxvi. 8, 9, and Micah v. 3.)

* See 2 Cor. xi. 2; also, Isa. liv. 5, 6; lxii. 4, 5; Matt. xxv. 1, &c.; Ephes. v. 25—32.

† Acts ii. 41—47; iv. 32, 33.

‡ Ps. ii. 1—3.

3—6.—“*The great red dragon*,” of imperial, pagan, and regal Rome, with its “*seven*” (significant) *heads* and “*ten*” *powerful horns*, as developed in due time,* was ready to devour the child of the Church, the “*woman in travail*,” as soon as it was born! For a season she triumphed over her great enemy—the very serpent-emblem of Satanic fury and malice—by the new birth of many believing souls to the faith and hope of the Gospel. But, while her tender infant offspring is, like a child, “*caught up*” to a dangerous position of distinction of courtly favour, with wide-spread authority,† she, herself a weak and homeless wanderer, flees from the face of the persecuting dragon, as into the retirement of “*the wilderness*,” to be maintained in seclusion, through her Lord’s watchful care and mercy, during “*1,260 years*.”‡

* The figure of a “*red dragon*,” became the standard emblem of the pagan Roman armies in the second century. The “*ten (crowned) horns*,” representing ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided after the Gothic, Vandal, and other invasions, (see Rev. viii. 7—13; ix., &c.,) were not brought into view at the time here supposed to be specified, namely, A.D. 313-14; or, about forty prophetic weeks after Pentecost, A.D. 33—4, when the great addition, *as if by a male child’s birth*, took place, of thousands of believers to the Christianized empire.

† The “*ruling all nations with a rod of iron*,” is here significant (verse 5) of the universal Roman empire in its nominally Christian form under Constantine, &c.

‡ This period of the obscurity, wilderness-life, and depression of the true witnessing Church, or Bride of Christ, has been explained as the period of God’s witnesses *preaching in*

Every page which we open, of this marvellous book, seems designed by the wisdom of God to impress upon our minds, more and more, through a variety of digressions and even repetitions of similar truths, under constantly changing scenes and forms, the real distinction between the sound members of Christ and the nominal, the faithful residue of the “*woman’s seed*” and the mere formal and outward professors — the children baptized with the Spirit, who “keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ,” (verse 17) and the old serpent’s brood in heart, who hate the light and love the darkness, “because their deeds are evil.” Like the *dragon’s tail*, (verse 4) essaying to draw down the “third part” of the stars of the sky;* so is the presumption and arrogancy of the “children of the wicked one,” who lift their heads aloft to the stars, defying the Most High; neither moved to contrition

sackcloth (Rev. xi. 3) 1260 years—from about A.D. 328 to A.D. 1588—when they could no longer be said to preach in sackcloth either in the British dominions, or Holland, Germany, Switzerland, &c.

* This figure has been explained, by the literal drawing down from their places of eminence and distinction of bishops and elders of the Church, in a “third part” of the Roman empire not affected by the *conversion* of the other parts. “In two-thirds of the empire, embracing its whole European and African territory, Christians enjoyed toleration; in the other, or Asiatic portion, they were still—after a brief and uncertain respite—exposed to persecution, in all its bitterness and cruelty, as before.”

by the terrors of the law, nor melted to love, nor brought to repentance and a better state of mind, by the gentle persuasive voice of the Gospel.

Let us take care, above all things, that we belong, like the early Christian community of believers, to the true Church of God, in heart and life; receiving, as they did, the Spirit of earnest faith into our souls; humbled under a sense of sins, and seeking salvation only in the way of God's appointment, *through a living union to Christ as the living Head of the Church*, "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." It is only by being deeply rooted into the rock, and grounded in love, that we can hope to bear up under the dark trials in our Christian ("wilder-ness") sojourn on earth, and maintain a steady pilgrim-course to the heavenly Zion; cheered by the beams of the "Sun of Righteousness," and supported by the "everlasting arms" of the heavenly Bridegroom. For thus, only, as we are sustained by Him, and depend upon Him, can we tread the world under our feet, and be able to stand against the wiles and assaults of the "red dragon" in our way—escaping from a tyranny worse than proud Pharaoh's, and a bondage more grinding than that of old Babylon; emerging, happily, out of the deep waters to the shores of the promised Canaan, and to the "Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all."*

* Gal. iv. 26.

“Fear not the foe, thou flock of God!
 Fear not the sword, the spear, the rod!
 Fear not the foe!
 He fights in vain who fights with thee!
 Soon shalt thou see his armies flee,—
 Himself laid low!

Come! cheer thee to the toil and fight!
 'Tis God, thy God, defends the right!
 He leads thee on!
 His sword shall scatter every foe,
 His shield shall ward off every blow!—
 The crown is won!

His is the battle, His the power!
 His is the triumph in that hour!—
 In Him be strong!
 So round thy brow the wreath shall twine,
 So shall the victory be thine!—
 And thine the song!”

REV. XII. 7—17.

MICHAEL AND THE DRAGON.—THE OLD SERPENT
 CAST TO EARTH.—SONG OF DELIVERANCE.—
 THE WOMAN'S WINGS FOR FLIGHT.—THE
 FLOOD AFTER HER.—THE HELP FROM THE
 EARTH.—WAR WITH THE REMNANT.

7.—And there was war in heaven:
 Michael and his angels fought against the
 dragon; and the dragon fought and his

angels, 8.—And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9.—And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10.—And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11.—And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12.—Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and *ye* that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13.—And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. 14.—And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into

the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15.—And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16.—And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17.—And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

7.—Long and desperate was the struggle which took place in the political and ecclesiastical “heavens,” even as between Michael,* the archangel of light, on the one part, and the arch-enemy of mankind, the prince of darkness, on the other, with their several forces ranged on either side, in desperate and deadly fray. The question to be settled, as by might of arms, was, between

* “*Michael*” “מִיכָאֵל,”—“*Who is as God,*” or “*like God.*” This symbolical name seems to apply, in its primary signification to the uncreated “Angel,” *Christ himself*. (See Josh. v. 13—15, vi. 2; Dan. x. 13—21, xii. 1; Jude ix.)

paganism, and its false gods and many idols, on the one hand, and Christianity, with its One living and true God—Trinity in Unity—*Jehovah of Hosts—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, on the other.

8.—To a dispassionate observer, it could not be a matter of doubt for a moment “who shall prevail.” Yet Satan, and his spirits of evil from beneath, are desperate in their onset, fierce in their anger, and unrelenting in their efforts to vanquish the saints of the Most High, and retain their ancient tyrannical and usurping strong-hold over the hearts and consciences of men. The triumph of the Cross of Christ is sealed and secured in heaven. The last overthrow of every enemy of the Lord and His Church is decreed on high. Vain are all the wildest efforts of the adversary of souls against the invincible “legions of angels” leagued on the side of Jesus! A few invisible champions of truth, from the heavenly regions of light, are more than a match for all the powers of darkness led on by the hell-hounds of the bottomless pit!

9.—The final casting out of the great Dragon, (“that old Serpent,”) the silencing of the Accuser (“Devil”), and the subdual of the adversary (“Satan”), are events of a similar easy and certain character, and stand only as a question of God’s own *time* for their fulfilment. At the precise period of the prophecy here under review, the arch-enemy of

Christ, and “deceiver of the whole world,” finds himself ejected from his imperial pagan throne, and his idol-loving votaries for a season fall, and lick the dust.

The dragon and his vile brood are brought down from their eminence of power and mischief, and can only now thrust out the hissing and forked tongue, and, for a time, bite the “horses’ heels,”* in abasement and rankling rage of defeat, betokening their eternally doomed discomfiture fast approaching, at the hands of Christ and His holy angels.

10.—At sight of this notable downfall, and in anticipation of the great day of complete destruction close at hand,† the whole Church of God below, and every saint and angel in the heaven above, seem to join in one universal shout of jubilant delight, and one harmonious utterance of heart-felt joy; saying—

“Now is come salvation, and strength,
And the KINGDOM of our God,
And the power of His CHRIST!—

* See prophecy on “*Dan*,” Gen. xlix. 17.

† It has been before remarked that the exultation of Christians was so great at the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, and his great success against his pagan opponents, that many thought the day of Christ’s reign was come, and the “*Millennium*,” promised and expected, of universal peace and blessedness, prosperity and glory to the whole Church and world was actually begun! Alas, how soon was this bright idea forcibly and lamentably dissipated!

“For the *accuser** of our brethren is cast down,
Which accused them before our God day and night!—

11.—And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb,
And by the word of their testimony ;
And they loved not their lives unto the death ! †—

12.—Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in
them ! ”

Then, as though checking the exuberance of their burst of loud rejoicing, and remembering that this casting down of the Evil One and his angels is not *final and complete*, and there yet remains a further trial to the “brethren” and beloved Spouse of Christ in the earth—they add, in words of solemn warning, to moderate, with caution, the abundance of the heart’s outspoken transport of joy—

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! ‡
For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath,
Because he knoweth that he hath but a short time ! ”

13.—When the evil spirit, “*the dragon*,” who had been cast down to the earth, sees that his day of doom is coming, and that he has but “a short time” left wherein to deceive the nations, and try to molest the peace of the Church, he is

* “*Accuser*,” is the exact meaning of the word for Satan,—“*διαβολος*. (See p. 43) His *accusation of the “brethren,” day and night, before God*, is intended to show the restless and daring malignity of the Evil Spirit against those who are in the way of salvation. (See Job. ii. 1—6 ; 1 Pet. v. 8.)

† Luke xiv. 26.

‡ The *maritime* countries and regions, insular and sea-coast, with naval and mercantile powers doing business in the “great waters,” are generally understood by this expression.

determined to make sharp use of his opportunity, by persecuting to the utmost the Spouse of Christ, and assailing the persons of all those who are children of God, and in spiritual union and covenant with the Lord.

As he was not able to annihilate the truth of Christ by ten pagan persecutions, and by the inroads of early heresiarchs; now he adopts the deeper artifice of corrupting the professing Church in her own children, by the glare of the world and the glory of its kingdoms.* As the adversary was foiled in his attempt to paganize the new Christianity, he now lays the deeper plot of Christianizing the old paganism.† In her lowly and suffering condition, he could not succeed in destroying the Church of Christ; but when her offspring is elevated to the high places of the earth, she is obliged to flee from the deceiver into "the wilderness," and her "man child," is in danger of being strangled, as soon as born.

14, 15.—The "arm of the Lord," for the sustenance of the Church, is found equal to the

* This was one of the temptations which the devil addressed to Christ, and, no doubt, the most subtle and ensnaring of the three. The good soldier may remain firm in the phalanx, and bear the brunt and heat of battle valiantly; but, when enjoying the luxuries of a vanquished city, he will soon fall a victim to the destroyer, like Samson in the lap of Delilah.

† Popery, with the fair mixture of attractive truth and the blending of foul pagan error, may well be styled, "*The masterpiece of Satan.*"

day of her trial. If *afflictions* abound from beneath, *consolations* shall be supplied likewise from above. God will be faithful to His promises of unceasing protection, and succour for His appointed "*time*,"* and will open a way of rescue in the fiercest storm of tribulation. "*Wings*,"† for flight and escape from the fury of the foe, shall be prepared and ready, whenever the "*floods*" arise to endanger his people's safety; or, should they want His support, and the bountiful supply in the *wilderness*, *then* He will deal towards them as He dealt lovingly with His once faithful Israel,—

"In all their afflictions He was afflicted,
And the angel of His presence saved them!
In His love and in His pity He redeemed them,
And bare them and carried them all the days of old."‡

* "*Time*," in prophecy, "*καιρος*," or "*χρονος*," (Rev. x. 6) is reckoned as a year of days (360 years); consequently, "*time, times, and a half*," are three and a half days—1,260 years, the same period, under different expressions, so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse. (Rev. xi. 2, 3, xii. 6, xiii. 5; and also in Dan. vii. 25. xii. 7—11.) (See Note Rev. xiii. 5.)

† The great "*Eagle's two wings*," said to be given to the "*Woman*" for her flight into the wilderness, have been sometimes illustrated by the great protection and defence and favour shown for the orthodox Church by Constantine, A.D. 313, in the West, and afterwards, A.D. 383, by Theodosius the Great in the East. The latter is reported to have said, "I will not permit, throughout my dominions, any other religion than that which obliges us to worship the Son of God in the unity of essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the adorable Trinity." (See Waddington's "*Ch. Hist.*")

‡ Isa. lxiii. 9; see, also, Exod. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 9—11.

16.—That which was designed to submerge and utterly overwhelm the Church, is turned, in the "providence of God's goodness," into a source of refuge and deliverance. The deluge of water, that drowns the ungodly, is made the means of safety for bearing up the Ark of God on its bosom. The circling "fire," that, in its furious nature, is formed to destroy and reduce to ashes in a few moments, is turned, by Divine art and skill, to a "chariot and swift horses," conveying the worn prophet aloft to one of the mansions in glory.* The "flame" of the furnace, which is heated some "seven times more than it was wont to be heated," to consume God's servants, is made to play harmlessly around their heads, and convince the proud Nebuchadnezzar, that there was none that could deliver like the one true God of Israel. So, the earthly princes and potentates, captains and conquerors, who came like a torrent down from the mountains against the young Christianized empire, urged forward by the might and malice of the "dragon," are absorbed in the empire's "mouth;" and themselves become obedient, compliant, and helpful to the cause of the Gospel.†

* 2 Kings ii. 11, 12. Such men as Athanasius, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustin, Luther, &c., undaunted champions of the truth in dangerous days, and such bodies of Christians as the Waldenses, Albigenses, Bohemians, &c., stand forth like Elijah, testifying for God, and preserved, yet "*so as by fire.*"

† The earthly, or civil power, of the empire formed a kind of

17.—The cause, therefore, was God's, and could not but prevail, whatever the enemy might attempt to the contrary.* In the worst days there will be a "remnant of the woman's seed," of those who are found faithful and who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." These will ever be carefully watched over by the Lord of the Church, and provided for in the evil and dark day of the adversary's attack. "*The wrath*" of men and devils shall be made to praise Him; and "*the remainder of wrath*" will He effectually restrain.† He will hold His flock as near and dear to Him as "the apple of His eye;" and never suffer one of them to perish from His presence, or fall from His favour, or be plucked, by any artifice or open assault of Satan, out of His saving and covenant-keeping hands!

A faithful "*remnant*," let us know, is to be found in every age of the Church. Their marked

breakwater, for a season against "the floods" of false Arian and other doctrines. And when the inundations of the Goths, Vandals, Huns, &c., took place, these, instead of converting the empire to their paganism or pernicious Arianism, gradually imbibed the sound Trinitarianism of the conquered nations among whom they became absorbed—"When, at last, the tempest had disburthened itself of its fury, and the clouds were broken—when the wild waters of that inundation had begun gradually to flow off, then the German tribes, being incorporated with the Romanic nations, formed the deep firm soil on which modern European society was to flourish." (Schlegel vol. ii. 117, 118.)

* Acts v. 38, 39.

† Ps. lxxvi. 10.

character, too, we should remember, is, that they belong to the Church's "seed," and "*keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ!*" They are the sound-hearted portion of professing believers in Jesus, and bear *witness for Christ*, as "epistles known and read of all men," by their life and conversation. They keep aloof from the unbelief and wickedness of the world, and guard against the deceits of the "father of lies," ever subtle and diverse; seeking refuge and protection under the wings of the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

O that we may be found among this redeemed and happy "remnant," as the only secure place and portion of the Church, the Bride of Christ—cherishing His love, keeping His commandments as the best proof of it, and obeying the Father's will in all things; ever looking and longing for the coming of the Lord, when the sighs and tears, the seclusion and affliction of the "wilderness"-state shall cease, and be succeeded by the song of blissful jubilee, and the peace of perennial rejoicing!

"Silent, like men in solemn haste,
Girded wayfarers of the waste,
We pass out at the world's wide gate,
Turning our back on all its state!
We press along the narrow road,
That leads to life, to bliss, to God!

* James i. 17.

“ We cannot and we would not stay ;—
 We dread the snares that throng the way ;
 We fling aside the weight and sin,
 Resolv’d the victory to win !
 We know the peril, but our eyes
 Rest on the splendour of the prize !

No idling now, no wasteful sleep,
 From Christian toil our limbs to keep :
 No shrinking from the desperate fight,
 No thought of yielding or of flight ;
 Through love of present gain or ease,
 Or seeking man and self to please !—

’Tis but a little, and we come
 To our reward, our crown, our home !
 A year or two, it may be less,
 And we have crossed the wilderness,
 Finished the toil,—the rest begun,—
 The battle fought—the TRIUMPH WON !”

REV. XIII. 1—10.

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA.—HIS WOUNDED HEAD,
 HEALED.—WORSHIP OF THE DRAGON AND THE
 BEAST.—WAR WITH THE SAINTS.—THEIR PA-
 TIENCE AND FAITH.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea,
 and saw a beast rise up out of the
 sea, having seven heads and ten horns,
 and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon

his heads the name of blasphemy. 2.—And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3.—And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4.—And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5.—And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. 6.—And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7.—And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8.—And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the

book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9. If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10.—He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

1.—The *deadly adversary* of the woman's spiritual "seed,"—before spoken of (Rev. xii.)—the *last subtle device of Satan* against the Church, before the consummation of Christ's glory in the earth—now appears more conspicuously on the scene in his full-grown form and character, as the wild "*beast from the sea.*"* In his pagan, fierce, and diabolical aspect and attack upon the new-born Christian empire, he is represented as the "*great red dragon,*"† standing ready to devour the nursling of the Church as soon as seen in the world. Having been partly disappointed of this prey, he next conjures up from the misty deep—from "the waves of this troublesome world" as it would appear to John, or the Church, standing on the quiet

* "*Wild beast*"—the proper meaning of "θηρίον"—as noticed Rev. xi. 7—"the sea" is stated to be his place of origin, in this case; the abyss, or "*bottomless pit,*" in the former. They are both, very evidently, "*twin-brethren,*" very similar both in origin and resemblance.

† See Rev. xii. 3, &c.

sea shore, in a season of comparative tranquillity to the empire,* a full-formed Papal counterpart to the recently defunct pagan imperial dynasty, described as a "*beast having seven heads and ten (crowned) horns*,"† with the remarkable addition to the former of "*the name of blasphemy*." The "*seven*

* The "flood" of Gothic and other great invasions having passed away from Rome, and the Church being tranquil for a time, as on "*the sand of the sea*" shore, the new papal imperial power rises into view. Some may contrast, from this figure of the smooth "*sand*," where John is represented standing, the "*peace*" within the soul which God's people possess, while the ungodly and wicked around in the world are "*like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*." (Isa. lxvii. 20.)

† It is to be noticed that, in this vision of the *Papacy*, the "*horns*" are crowned; whereas, before—when the empire was pagan—the "*heads*" are crowned. (See Rev. xii. 3.) The "*seven heads*," (common to Rome *pagan* and *papal*) are explained to John (Rev. xvii. 9, 10) as (1) "*seven mountains*," or hills, "*on which the woman (base papal) sitteth*;" and (2) as "*seven kings*," or forms of sovereign rule and government, as *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military or consular tribunes, emperors (pagan) regal and imperial Papal*. The double explanation makes the meaning more certain as attaching unmistakably to Rome.

The "*ten horns*" are also explained (Rev. xvii. 12) as meaning "*ten kingdoms*," or reigning independent sovereignties, which were formed after the destruction of the Roman (Western) empire, and its being broken up into *ten* separate (Gothic) kingdoms—"ten (crowned) horns."—These are explained, nearly by general consent, as having continued much the same ever since the sixth century—viz., 1, *Anglo-Saxons*, (in Britain); 2, *Franks*, (central France); 3, *Allemanni*, (Rhine); 4, *Burgundians*, (S.E. France and part of Switzerland)

heads and ten horns” designate the sameness of the dragon-like power and character of the new enemy of God’s people, as well as the identity of his lair and locality—ROME; but the specific “*name*,” marked on each of the “heads”—of “BLASPHEMY,” is different from anything seen before, and would seem to show that this new and monstrous opponent appears on the scene as an open *traducer* of God’s revealed word, and a *usurper*, in some *very base* form, of the name, titles, and honour of Christ himself.*

2.—The papal power, in its regal and pontifical form, so contrary, as before seen,† to the will of Christ, and the teaching of His chosen apostles as to the lowliness of His Church, is shown to be *corrupt* in its origin—emerging gradually out of a sea “*whose waters cast up mire and dirt*;”‡ inspired by Satan’s own “power” and

5, *Visigoths*, (Spain); 6, *Suevi*, (Portugal and Gallicia); 7, *Vandals*, (Africa and Mediterranean); 8, *Bavarians*, (on the Danube); 9, *Heruli and Ostrogoths*, (Italy); 10, *Lombards*, (Lombardy). At the Diet of Ratisbon, A.D. 1240, one of the bishops spoke of the papal kingdoms as ten.

* The word “βλασφημία,” as applied to religion, signifies speaking impiously of God, (verse 6,) or of what peculiarly relates to the honour of His holy Name and word. (Parkhurst.)

† See Remarks and Notes at Rev. xii. 6.

‡ Isa. lvii. 20. The bishops of Rome gradually grew into power and political importance from the fourth to the seventh century. Then, Luther observes, “Gregory the Great (A.D. 590 to 604) was the last bishop of the Romish Church; the rest

master-spirit, having his “*seat*,” or throne, and “*great authority*,” even above that of Christ;* fierce and blood-thirsty as “*the leopard*,” with the brutal and savage cruelty of “*a bear*,” and having “*a mouth*,” roaring like “*a lion*,” and ever ready fiercely to devour the prey.†

3.—The pagan (*imperial and sixth*) head of this monster from the sea is seen by the prophet “*as it were wounded to death*,” which occurred, as before noticed, in the accession of the Western empire to (*nominal*) Christianity in the fourth century: but “*his deadly wound is (soon) healed*” in the mongrel form of *paganized Christianity* under the Roman Pontiffs when made universal bishops, and having earthly sovereignty. The people who submitted were confounded at this power, and received it with fulsome admiration and looked upon it with “*wonder*” and blind astonishment.

4-6.—As this admiration was turned into acts of *Divine adoration* paid to the “*beast*,” the

are Popes, or Pontiffs of the Roman Court.” He speaks, also, of the papacy being established by the Emperor Phocas, who reigned A. D. 602-610.

* See Rev. xvi. 10; 2 Thes. ii. 4; and Dan. xi. 36, 37.

† See Dan. vii. 4-7. There would appear in the character of this Satan-inspired monster, the combined evil qualities of the three wild animals prophetically representing the three preceding *universal empires*—the Assyrian (lion), the Medo-Persian (bear), and the Grecian (leopard). Pope Innocent III. was styled “*stupor mundi*”—“*wonder of the world*.”

dragon, who gave him his "power, and great authority" (verse 2) may also be said to be worshipped by all the earthly inhabitants "*whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world*"—who, in short, are sworn followers of the base antichrist, instead of humble followers and believers in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.*

Not only is "*the name of blasphemy* upon the heads (verse 1) of this animal, but he also "*opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and them that dwell therein,*"—"speaking great things and blasphemies."†

* "*The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,*" is an expression which leads us back to the great promise of a dying and atoning Redeemer for man, in "*the seed of the woman,*" (Gen. iii. 15,) bruising the serpent's head, and having his heel bruised by the serpent in crucifixion.

It may be remembered, as a distinguishing character of papists and Romanizers, that they put the pope (antichrist) *above the Son of God* in the blasphemous titles ascribed and worship paid to him, as also in virtually annulling the doctrine of Christ's all-sufficient atonement, in the reiterated mummary of the mass-sacrifice, and the intercession of Virgin and saints. By thus *denying the Son*, they deny the Father who sent Him. 1 John ii. 22, iv. 3; 2 Thes. ii. 3, 4, ix. 12.

† This description accurately identifies the corrupt Romish Church with Daniel's prophecy (vii. 8, 20, 25,) and with St. Paul's character given to "*the wicked one,*" the "*man of sin.*" (2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.) We read (in Dan. vii. 25) "*He shall speak great things against the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into His hand, until a time and times*

And this power is stated to have its time of continued baneful influence over the Church of Christ, and His saints in the earth, for the space of "*forty-two months*."

The mystic time of the delivering of the saints of God into the hands of this monstrous papal power in Christendom, so often referred to in holy writ, may be reckoned from the full elevation of the popedom, by imperial grants, edicts, and licence, into *universal sovereignty*, and its establishment over the faith of nations; having

and the dividing of time,"—or three years and a half exactly, according with the time of the beast—"forty-two months," (verse 5,) 1,260 years. The rise of the papacy into great power was, as some think, between A.D. 533 and 606.

Some of the blasphemous assumptions of Rome are, that, (1), The pope, as *universal bishop*, has the name of God, and is above all kings, bishops, and emperors; (2), he can *make new laws*; but, himself, be judged by no man; (3), he allows himself to be placed on the altar of St. Peter's, and to have acts of worship paid him; (4), he assumes to be *Vicar-Christ*—the Church's lord and king, reigning, on his throne of St. Peter's, over all Churches and peoples; (5), he assumes infallibility—an attribute of the Supreme; (6), he denounces death, temporal and eternal, to all that dispute his authority and resist his laws; (7), he professes to forgive sins (past and to come) by plenary absolution and indulgences; (8), he assumes to create, by the priesthood, the body of Christ, and worship it in the elements of bread and wine—thus blaspheming "*the Tabernacle of God*;" (9), he calls Protestants, and men who hold to the pure scriptures, *heretics*, and classes them with the "*children of the devil*;" (10), he speaks against the Bible-translations, and causes them to be debarred from the people, and burned.

almost absolute authority against all opponents who adhered to the pure and undefiled religion of the Gospel.

7.—From the time that “the saints” are given into its unrighteous hands, the effect of the Papacy has been fatal to the peace of the Church; and God’s people, among “*all kindreds, tongues, and nations*” subject to Rome, wherever her spiritual sway extended or she received temporal aid from the civil power, have felt, one time or other, the weight of her crushing arms of conquest, and thousands have expiated with their lives their earnest and stedfast faith in the One true Christ.

8.—The “dwellers upon the earth”—the carnal portion of the world in general—have their faith and worship on the side of “the beast;” and, therefore, can have no part nor lot in the purchased “inheritance of the saints in light,” which is provided and secured for those only whose names are written in the “*Lamb’s book of life.*”*

9.—Particular attention is drawn† to this marked distinction between the worldly followers of the idolatrous and persecuting Church, and the “saints” who are the followers of the Lamb and sound believers in His Atonement. “Whoso is wise will consider these things.” The prudent, who give their hearts to God, will beware in time,

* See Rev. iii. 5, xx. 12, xxi. 27; Dan. xii. 1.

† See Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, &c.

and listen to His voice; and *then* they shall understand "*the loving-kindness of the Lord.*"

10.—The fair conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing delineation of the great oppressor of the Church of the living God, is, that a time of *just retribution* is not far off. However proudly and presumptuously *Rome* may arrogate to herself the prerogatives of God's sovereign rule and judgment, and "*leading captive*" and "*killing with the sword,*" at her pleasure, the innocent people and "*saints of the Most High;*" she shall be made to know who the Supreme Ruler and Judge is, by a terrible retributory sentence executed in due season against her. She who has led "*captive,*" enslaved, and imprisoned, for the sake of the truth, so many precious souls of believers in Jesus, shall herself taste, from the hands of the Lord, the galling chains of captivity; and she, who has "*killed with the sword*" such numbers of God's best servants, shedding their blood by war, and torture, and massacre, shall herself feel the edge of God's sword, that it is sharp—and the force of His warlike arm, that it is formidable and irresistible.

The "*saints*" are to be comforted and strengthened, in their "*faith and patience,*"* by such assurances as these of the Lord's promised help

* See Heb. vi. 12, x. 36, 37; James i. 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 5—7.

and deliverance in the hour of trial. They are, at the same time, cautioned not to take the law into their own hands—not to take the sword, lest they “perish with the sword;” * not to return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing. Let them abide firm in *faith*, and endure grief, suffering wrongfully, yet *patiently*. Then, Christ will take up the quarrel, and maintain their cause on high. He will arise, as He did for Stephen, to the great comfort of His chosen. He will plead effectually for the complete emancipation of His Church; and, in her patient waiting and quiet abiding, shall be found her continued strength and confidence; and, at the same time, the everlasting shame, contempt, and confusion of her enemy.

* Matt. xxvi. 51; also, Gen. ix. 6. The taking up the sword, in religious wars, has ever been a deadly scourge, but generally begun by the Papal Church. Since the Reformation, and after the pacification of Passau (A.D. 1555), there was a war of ten years in the Low Countries, under the cruel Duke of Alva (Spain), begun in 1569, and ended in the union of Utrecht, 1579; another war, or rather *united Roman Catholic attack upon the Protestant liberties of England*, which ended in the complete and disgraceful defeat of Spain's proud Armada (A.D. 1588); another war against Protestants in France from 1572 to 1598; then the “thirty years'” war in Germany, &c.—1618 to 1648; Irish massacre of Protestants, 1641; Revocation of Edict of Nantes, 1683 to 1697; again, from 1701 to 1714, when our great Duke of Marlborough humbled the pride of Louis XIV.; lastly, Britain and Prussia against the continental confederacy, 1778 to 1782. (Keith's “Signs,” vol ii. p. 77.)

“JESUS, thou Friend of sinners, hear,
And look with pity down!
The broken heart, the contrite tear,
Can never meet Thy frown!
For Thou wilt soothe the mourner's soul
That looks alone to Thee;
That loathes the chains of sin's control,
And longeth to be free!

O JESUS! Thou who once hast known
The subtle tempter's art,
And with a Brother's love hast shown
That Thou with man hast part;
Send down Thy Holy Spirit now,
Thy scattered flock to cheer,
Ere persecution's deadly blow
Shall smite their hearts with fear!

O JESUS! bid Thy chosen Church,
In love, be one with Thee,
Ere God's avenging sword shall search
His inmost sanctuary!
A “patient,” true, devoted band
From midst the sons of earth,
May they, at Thy belov'd command,
In dauntless “faith” come forth!”

REV. XIII. 11—18.

THE LAMB-LIKE BEAST WITH TWO HORNS.—LIFE GIVEN TO THE IMAGE.—THE MARK OF THE BEAST.—THE NUMBER AND NAME.

11.—And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12.—And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13.—And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14.—And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15.—And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of

the beast should be killed. 16.—And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17.—And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18.—Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.

11.—A picture still more precise and characteristic of the papacy, as a Church, is brought before us in this part of the vision, (which is closely allied with the last), of the *two-horned lamb-like creatures of the earth*, having all the power of the former "*beast from the sea*;" but, like a wolf in sheep's clothing,* in his ability to do mischief to the fold of Christ.

12.—While the "ten kingdoms" of the Papedom are still vigorous, and have settled down as regular dynasties in the old Roman "earth," this new-featured animal-resemblance appears on the stage, lamb-like in its two ecclesiastically-formed†

* John x. 1, 2.

† Mr. Cuninghame (in his "*Dissertations*"), Mr. Faber, and others, consider the two *lamb-like horns* to be the emblems of the Roman Catholic hierarchy; the "*two horns*" being supposed

“horns,” but *dragon-like* in its oppressive temporal power.* With this combination, as might be expected, we have before us the papal domination in its advanced and most dangerous stage of development; after the “deadly wound” in the pagan imperial head was completely healed, and its influence over empires and kingdoms was well and thoroughly consolidated. This we find to have been the case in a marked manner, when the papacy was for a season dominant, and as if worshipped; when the two authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, mutually supported and patronized each other; when the great CHARLEMAGNE left his capital, Paris, for the decem-regal city of Rome, and there received his crown, as the most pious Augustus, a faithful son of the Church, from the hands of the lordly pope.†

to signify the *regular and secular* clergy of that Church—“To an ecclesiastical kingdom, subservient to the head of an ecclesiastical empire, the idea of a regularly organized body of ecclesiastics must be annexed.”

* “*The Papacy*”—it has been well remarked—“as a sovereign governmental power, is one thing; the Church of Rome as an ecclesiastical system, with its bishop for its ecclesiastical head, is another.”

† *Clovis*, King of the Franks, was one of the first to acknowledge the authority of Rome, A.D. 496. *Charlemagne* (we read) was crowned by Pope Leo, with great pomp, at Rome, A.D. 800-1; and was then hailed as “crowned by God,” the great Emperor of the Romans—exactly fulfilling the prediction of the revival of the old (pagan) defunct empire—“the deadly wound was healed”—the very “image of the beast,” hereby

13.—The “lying wonders” which the Romish Church has invariably practised, where she found it helpful and advancing to her cause, among the ignorant and credulous—“to confirm the truths of religion by ghosts and miracles”—are notorious. In our own days of new light and social intelligence we have heard of such absurdities palmed upon the inhabitants as the fictitious miracles of the Bambino (or, image of the infant Jesus), carried in procession through the streets of Rome, of the blood of St. Januarius liquefied at Naples, the holy coat of Trèves, and a fountain in Spain blessed by the presence of the Virgin Mary!

14.—Thus the world has been duped, especially during the dark ages of Popery’s revelry and reign, to “*believe a lie.*”^{*} Like the great image

revived (verse 15) by the power of the *lamb-like creature with “two horns.”* So, again, the Emperor of Germany, Otho, A.D. 961, and his successors, went to Rome to be crowned; and it was laid down as a law—introduced by force, and ratified by time—(1), That the prince, who was elected at the German Diet, acquired, from that instant, the subject kingdom of Italy and Rome; (2), that he might not legally assume the titles of Emperor and Augustus till he had received the crown from the hands of the Roman Pontiff. (Gibbon.)

* See Gibbon. Even Gregory the Great (A.D. 600), who, with the Emperor of the East, Justinian (A.D. 533), may be reckoned as laying the foundation of the Papacy, was known personally to have sanctioned “*pious frauds*” (as they were termed) but really religious impostures. The Greek, or Eastern branch of the Church, is equally gross in the pretence of miracles, as the Western or Romish. Every Easter, at the

set up by Nebuchadnezzar, in the plain of Dura and the province of Babylon, which was, in those days, the great “golden lie” of the universal Assyrian emperor, who trampled like a wild beast upon God’s chosen people; so the Papacy, with its monstrous ecclesiastical fraud and imperial headship, of apparent gold but real iron and brass, “devouring and breaking in pieces” every opponent, and “stamping the residue”* in the dust, has stood forward on the plains of Christendom, as the great enemy of the chosen of God, threatening and (where she could) inflicting the pain of the “burning fiery furnace” upon any one who would not bow down and worship “the golden image which she had set up.”†

15—17.—The *civil power* of the State, the great “image” endowed with life by Rome, has been

Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, the priests profess to draw down fire from heaven, deceiving the people by miserable artifices. The reason that the Eastern (Greek branch) is not so much referred to in the latter Apocalyptic visions, may be (1), that, though almost as corrupt in creed and practice as the Roman, she has never been so forward in persecuting those dissenting from her; (2), her importance has much declined ever since the Turks have possessed the once famous city of Chrysostom.

* See Dan. vii. 7, 19. The “*little horn*” (v. 8, and 20, 21) springing up among “the ten,” and “before whom there were three of the first horns plucked-up by the roots,” is another form of description for the Papal power among the ten kingdoms, and eventually gaining temporal and political sovereignty by what were called “the *States of the Church*,” or, “*Patrimony of St. Peter*.” † Dan. l.iii.

constantly summoned into the murderous service of the Papal court; to arise—like Pontius Pilate against Jesus—with the outstretched arm of the law and the whetted sword of sanguinary justice against all who were suspected, accused, or condemned of heretical resistance to her authority, or daring denial of her creed. The *ban of exclusion* and isolation; the malediction “by bell, book, and candle;” the interdict, anathema, and excommunication, forbidding that friendly intercourse in visits and conversation which is the common bond of comfort in life, and those business-transactions in buying and selling which are the mutual support of human society. Such fearful spiritual weapons as these, and worse, have been employed regularly and unrelentingly against each humble and sincere follower of Christ, of every class and condition, that could be ferreted out and found; and who presumed to dispute, or resist, or refuse to bear “the name” or “the mark,”* or “number of the name,” as slaves of this enormous usurpation, this antichristian superstition and peace-destroying apostasy!

18.—The “*number of the name*” is specified

* The “*Mark*,” may be known as profession of faith in the power of “*the keys*,” or avowal of *Rome’s supremacy*—the “*Name*,” as the *Latin Papacy*—and “*Number of the name*,” the Latin “*apostate*”—all which refer to certain outward signs of wilful vassalage and blind submission to the Popedom in those who profess the faith of the Romish Church. As

under an enigmatical form, as a matter of thought and investigation for those who have "*the wisdom*" to investigate, closely and prayerfully, the "deep things of God." As it fixes the stigma of vile oppression and corruption upon a *great power* then existing in another (*pagan*) form, when John wrote; it would have been dangerous to the early Christian community to have it plainly revealed. It is presented to us, therefore, somewhat in a mystical character, which cannot easily be deciphered, except by "*the wise, who shall understand.*" The "number of the beast" is declared to be "the number of a man"—that is, the *name of a man*, which is to be known by a certain given *numerical* character, 666. This mystic number has tried the ingenuity and skill of many, and, in some cases, there have been very wild attempts at interpretation. The best clue to its meaning, as is now generally thought, is to be found in the signification given to it by one who

Christ has *His own servants and children*, marked as all bearing "*His Cross*," and numbered by "*the seal of God's Spirit*," (Matt. x. 38; Rev. vii. 1) and has *His new saving name* of "Jesus, our Righteousness," inscribed as it were upon them, and *their names* enrolled for ever in "the book of life;" (Rev. iii. 5; xvii. 8) so antichrist, the base counterfeit of Christ, has his bond-slaves distinguished by a mark, name, and number, which make their devoted service and spiritual thralldom to "*the man of sin*" unmistakable. The mark, "*in the right hand*" of antichrist's followers, is considered to designate their expected and determined zeal in taking up carnal weapons in his unrighteous cause.

is known to have been once a scholar of Polycarp, who himself may have learned it from John. Irenæus says, concerning it, "*The name, 'LATEINOS,'* contains the number six hundred, three score, and six; and it is very likely to be true, because the most substantial (the last of Daniel's four) kingdoms has this name, for they are Latins who now reign.*" "But," he adds, as though humbly distrusting and acknowledging that it was not his own "wisdom" which led him to the discovery, "*we will not boast of this.*"

* The word *Lateinos*, given to show this power, is the Greek word for "*the name of a man*"—*Latinus*, the first King of Latium, that portion of ancient Italy of which Rome was the capital. In early times the kingdom and people, in their civil power, were called "Roman;" but, when the Eastern and Western empires were disconnected, the Eastern was called *the Greek*, the Western *the Latin Church* (and empire). A writer on this subject (Dr. More) states:—"They *Latinize* every thing; mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, and bulls, are conceived in *Latin*. The Papal councils speak in Latin; women themselves pray in Latin; the Scriptures are read in no other language under the Papacy than Latin. In short, all things are Latin." The name is made out of figures answering to the letters, as follows—

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \Lambda & A & T & E & I & N & O & \Sigma & & & \\ 30 & + & 1 & + & 300 & + & 5 & + & 10 & + & 50 & + & 70 & + & 200 & = & 666. \end{array}$$

The Greek word, "*Ἀποσταρῆς*"— $1 + 80 + 70 + 6 + 1 + 300 + 8 + 200 = 666$, is the same number. It has been noticed that, taking "*the number*" as also characteristic of *the time* to which this prophecy concerning Rome (ch. xiii.) may refer, it does not fall very short of the supposed period of the power and rage of "the beast"—between A.D. 606 and 666. The symbol of Christ and the true Church (it is remarked), as adopted by

It has pleased Divine "wisdom" thus to stamp with indisputable and indelible marks the origin, work, character, and name of the great apostasy of Christendom, Papal Rome. She is still existing, alas! as a blot upon our Christianity, and the bane of society, though stripped (as we shall see foretold, ch. xvii. 16) of much of her temporal dignity and ecclesiastical power by the hand of God. She survives, and is rampant wherever she has deluded vassals, as in our unhappy sister island, who bow subserviently, as if in worship of the very image, and bear the real "mark, and name, and number of the name" of the beast.

May a heart-felt love and adoring honour of the Lord Jesus, who is the only true "Image of the Invisible God," the Shepherd-King of His Church, ever rule in us! May *the mark* of His saving Name ever be imprinted upon our hearts! May we ever seek to glorify that holy Name in all our

Constantine, is ✠ (XP), the two first letters of "Χριστός," and these are equivalent to "*seven hundreds*;" whereas, the number for antichrist and his false church is Xξς, and these compose 666 (three sixes). "*Seven*," is a well-known *sacred number* betokening completion, rest after labour, &c. (Gen. ii. 2; Matt. xi. 28, 29.) But "*six*" is the symbol of conflict and pain—the "*sixth day*" of the week (crucifixion), and "*sixth hour*" of the day (John xix. 14), the *sixth* seal, the *sixth* trumpet, the *sixth* vial—like the "*day of preparation*" before the great Sabbath, betoken seasons of *severest trial* to the Church. The *triple* form of the name, also, may suggest the *triple* "*falling away*" of the Roman Church from original simplicity (Rom. i. 8) in *faith, worship, and practice*. (See Dr. Wordsworth's "Notes.")

thoughts, words, and works. So shall His Spirit's grace within us, His Sovereign rule and intercessory power for us on high with the Father, and His guardian care continually around, by giving His angels charge concerning us, keep our feet from stumbling upon "the dark mountains;" or ever falling into the arms of the great deceiver, who lies in wait, like a lion lurking secretly in his den, to waylay the unwary, to beguile the unstable, and to "murder the innocent."

"JEHOVAH, judge my cause!

Avenge me of my foe!

Fight against Satan and his host,

Oh, lay the strong one low!

I have cast off his yoke,

Renounc'd his cursed sway!

For this he doubly hates, and longs

To seize me as his prey!

Give me the lowly heart,

Cast out each thought of pride;

Let gentleness and love come in,

And as my guests abide!

Thy will, not mine, be done!

I would not choose my own;

But let me ever—ever be—

Thy servant, Lord, alone!

JESUS, to Thee I flee,

Jesus, thy cross I clasp;

Save me from Satan's hellish power,

O, pluck me from his grasp!

So shall I praise thee, Lord!

And Thy great NAME adore;

With Father and with Spirit On

For ever, evermore!"

REV. XIV. 1—13.

THE LAMB WITH HIS "CHOSEN" ON MOUNT ZION.—MARKED CHARACTER AND NEW SONG.—FALL OF BABYLON ANNOUNCED.—FOREMOST OF ITS WORSHIPPERS.—PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS, AND BLESSEDNESS.

AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2.—And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: 3.—And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4.—These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the first fruits unto God and to the

Lamb. 5.—And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. 6.—And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7.—Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8.—And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9.—And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10.—The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11.—And the smoke of their torment ascendeth

up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12.—Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 14.—And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

1.—From time to time, through the chequered history of the Church in its militant condition on earth, the Spirit of God is pleased to reveal—for the comforting of the mourners and the strengthening of the weak—an elect and choice company of believers,* safe in the darkest days and against the most subtle and serpent-like adversary; *standing* upright, as represented in this vision, with "*the Lamb*" on Mount Zion, and with the goodly numbers, styled "*the 144,000.*"†

* These have been depicted before (1), under the figures of "*the sealed*" thousands out of the tribes of the spiritual Israel Rev. vii. (2), as the "*worshippers*" in the altar-court of the temple, ch. xi. 1, and (3), as the "*sun-clothed woman*" and her seed, persecuted by "*the dragon*" and his seed, ch. xii. and xiii.

† The "*Lamb*," in this scene, stands in forcible contrast with.

All these are known—in spite of the dragon's attempt to root them out of the Church, and the "seven-headed" monster's infatuated and blaspheming power, marvellously and politically arrayed against them*—secure in the Divine favour, ornaments and defenders of the true faith, recognized by the Father above as His children in Christ Jesus, having "*His Name and His Son's Name*,† written on their foreheads."‡

2.—By the "voice from heaven," as that of "*many waters and of a great thunder*," it may be

"*the beast*," the immoveable "*Mount Zion*" with the "troubled sea" out of which he rises (ch. xiii. 1). *The number* need not relate to the same period of Church history as the former. It is only used as pointing to a complete, known, and sufficient number seen in certain stages of the Church's progress, to the last perfected number of her "elect children."

* See ch. xiii. 1, 2, 6, 7.

† In several copies of the Greek, and in the old Latin translation, is found the reading, "*having His (the Lamb's) name, and the Father's name*," &c. This, as observed by the good, quaint commentator (T. Brightman), "is more express, seeing we are by Christ adopted to be sons." (Rom. viii. 15—17; Gal. iv. 5, 6.)

‡ It will be remembered (see remarks, ch. vii.) by those who know and love the truth in the Spirit of Christ, that it is not *the manner* of making the mark, or kind of mark made of the cross, or other visible sign on the person, that is to distinguish the true children of God and the consistent followers of the Lamb from others; but it is, as here stated, the writing symbolically imprinted on their foreheads, as a leading *truth*, that "*God by Christ is their Father*." Luther used to say to his friends, "Learn to know Christ—Christ crucified—Christ come down from heaven to dwell with sinners! Learn to sing the NEW SONG—"Thou, JESUS, art my Righteousness!"

learnt, that it is not without many waves of this troublesome world to be waded through, and many alarms from the warring elements of evil around, that the sacred band of the "Mount Zion" followers of the Lamb can stand, and prevail in evil days of *"rebuke and blasphemy."*

They shall, at length, by their perseverance and after battling manfully with their bitter foes—

"Come with singing unto Zion ;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their head :
They shall obtain gladness and joy,
And sorrow and mourning shall flee away."*

An epoch is here signified of much triumph and devout praise for God's mercies, to which the attention of the Church is remarkably summoned by

"The voice of harpers harping on their harps."

We can conceive no other period more suitably prefigured than that when the great blow was struck at the head of the "beast" by the publishing of the Bible through the length and breadth of Europe by such "followers of the Lamb" as Wycliffe, Tyndal, Luther, and by the faithful testimony of the witnessing Churches of Piedmont, Bohemia, Saxony, Switzerland, and Britain, shortly before and after the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. It is well-known that, with the circulation of the truths of "all Holy Scripture," arose a great company

* Isa. li. 11.

of preachers* of the word, and congregations of believers, whose great delight was with their reformed doctrine and worship, to sing lustily, and with a good “courage,” sweet hymns of praise, psalms of thanksgiving, and anthems of holy rejoicing to the God of their salvation—as songs attuned to golden harps of solemn and melodious sound.†

3.—The “*song*” of the saints and chosen of God, in the temple of the Lord, before the throne and mercy-seat, before the cherubim and seraphim, and the priests or elders of the sanctuary—the choirs in heaven harmonizing with those in the Church on earth—differs in tone and feeling from all other, being full of holy gratitude and adoring love for the blessings of salvation. It is called

* See Rev. x. 11.

† The Greek is, “*they sing*,” and *are singing*, not “*sang*,”—showing the regular *continuance* of the cause and the practice. The *singing of hymns and psalms* on social occasions, and in public worship, has been, and is to the present day, a marked feature of the sound Reformed Churches, after the example, too, of the early Christians. Many hymns were composed by Luther himself, and other German divines and poets, three centuries ago. “Hymns from the Land of Luther,” large *Moravian* and other collections, and numerous more recently-compiled *Hymnals*, have been in use; and the good Protestant *harpers* (thank God) continue, and still increase in their “*harping*.” On Canticles ii. 12, the Rev. W. Ainsworth remarks, “The saints, *feeling the comforts of God’s word and Spirit*, do sing the praises of God, ‘with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.’” Protestants *join* heartily in this; *Romanists* and *Ritualists* are chiefly *listeners*.” Isa. xxiv. 16; Eph. v. 19 Col. iii. 16.

“*new*,”* because it is the *song of God’s redeemed* in Christ’s New Testament, which none can learn or sing, but they who really and heartily belong to Christ, as his chosen and faithful children;† and because, about the time of the victorious *Reformation*, a *new and grand victory* was achieved, through the merciful interposing and preserving hand of God, by a great deliverance of His flock out of Rome’s Papal power, and the release of thousands from her terrible bondage.

4.—The character of all who follow the Lamb, “*redeemed from among men*,” and singing the praises of God with a believing and thankful spirit, is consistent with their name and profession. Like the “*wise virgins*,”‡ they are of

* The “*new song*,” is also mentioned Rev. v. 9. *There*, on the occasion of “the Lamb’s” taking the sealed book of prophecy and opening it, pertaining to the salvation of the Church by His “grace”—and *here* (ch. xv. 3, 4), for a great “*victory over the beast*,” and freedom of faith, worship, and loving service.

† They are styled the select “144,000,” to distinguish them from the promiscuous singers of God’s praise, who are not really “*harpers*,” but mere *vocal performers*, or *lip servants*, or *indifferent listeners*. See Matt. xv. 7—9; Isa. xxix. 13.

‡ “*A pure faith*,” says Augustine, “*is the virginity of the soul*.” The term “*virgins*,” applied to the followers of Christ, whether here or elsewhere (Matt. xxv. 1, 2 Cor. xi. 2), has a *spiritual*, and not (necessarily) a *literal* meaning. The “*bed undefiled*” (Heb. xiii. 4) of holy wedlock is pronounced “honourable” among all men. As an unsound faith and idolatrous practice (like Popery’s) are likened to unfaithfulness of the married state, to moral defilement and impurity; so the sound faith, and practical holiness of the Gospel-Church are likened

"*undefiled*" life and conversation; they have the "*anointing*" and light of the Holy Spirit's grace within, and not merely held in the hand; they strive to follow the example, obey, and confide in the word, attend the ordinances, and partake of the spirit of the atoning Lamb of God in all things; and, thus, they prove themselves among the goodly "*first fruits*" of a greater harvest to succeed in due season, in "the day of the Lord."

5.—As far as they do this, *though never boasting of perfection*,* they are pronounced, by the authority of the inspired record, *free from "guilt" and condemnation before God*;† their sins are laid upon Christ; their heart is right with God; their lips utter what their hearts feel; and their feet follow in the way of peace and uprightness, "*whithersoever*" the Lamb leadeth, for he ever "*goeth before them, as "the good Shepherd and Bishop of souls."*"‡

6, 7.—The "*first-fruits to God and the Lamb*,"§ gathered out from the general contagion, and after the first great victory over "*the beast and his*

to virgin-purity, and the avoidance of everything which tends to idolize and "serve the creature more than the Creator." The *celibacy* of the clergy, enjoined by Papal Rome, and the impulse given to convents, monasteries, &c., have led naturally to the grossest abuses.

* James iii. 2; 1 Kings viii. 46; 1 John i. 8.

† See Rom. viii. 1; Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

‡ John x. 1-5; 1 John ii. 6.

§ Jer. ii. 3; James i. 18.

“*new*,”* because it is the *song of God’s redeemed* in Christ’s New Testament, which none can learn or sing, but they who really and heartily belong to Christ, as his chosen and faithful children;† and because, about the time of the victorious *Reformation*, a *new and grand victory* was achieved, through the merciful interposing and preserving hand of God, by a great deliverance of His flock out of Rome’s Papal power, and the release of thousands from her terrible bondage.

4.—The character of all who follow the Lamb, “*redeemed from among men*,” and singing the praises of God with a believing and thankful spirit, is consistent with their name and profession. Like the “*wise virgins*,”‡ they are of

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image," are followed by the vision of "*three flying angels*;" each representing some fact bearing upon the great progress of "*the everlasting Gospel*," and the imminent downfall of modern Babylon, consequent upon the emancipation of the Bible by the light of the Reformation.

The "*first angel*"—as the messenger of light from above to the Church below—is seen, as it were, directing his swift onward flight in mid-heaven, to the "*nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people*" of the whole habitable globe.* The truth now is no longer bound. Like a long enslaved captive in a dark dungeon, suddenly set free to the light of day, his shackles struck off, and the whole world *freely* before him; the Book of God, as the "*flying angel*" of truth, is liberated, and sent forth with the speed of lightning to the ends of the earth, heralding the pure and everlasting Gospel of the grace of God for the salvation

* The great and rapid increase of *missions abroad*, to Jew and Gentile, has been a marked feature since the rise of Protestantism and the publication of the Bible in various languages. British Societies, such as those for "*The Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*," for "*Missions to Africa and the East*," for "*Promoting Christianity among the Jews*," and "*Continental and American Protestant Missions*," to *all parts of the world*; Bible Societies, Christian Knowledge and Religious Tract Societies, &c. &c., are proofs of the carrying forth of "*the everlasting Gospel*" on its errand of love, as if by angelic hands, to the farthest regions of the world; for spreading the knowledge of the true God and Saviour of sinners, and for causing all people to "*cast their idols to the moles and to the bats*."

of all that will believe. It is no longer this country and Church, or that; it is no longer Europe, or Proconsular Asia, or Northern Africa; but, it is "*to the end of the earth,*"* that salvation by faith in Christ crucified is freely offered and widely proclaimed, in such clear terms as these, "*loudly*" uttered by the "first angel," for all to hear—

"Fear God! and give glory to Him!

For the hour of His judgment is come!

And worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and
the sea, and the fountains of waters!"

8.—The "*second angel,*" follows after, almost immediately, showing the certain and speedy effect of the "preached Gospel" among the nations, not only in winning countless souls to the faith and love of Christ, but in opening men's eyes to the abominations of Rome, and thus hastening forward, with God's help, the fall of the idol-city and the kingdom of "the beast," and fore-showing the fatal blow and ruin *certain*, as if already come—

"BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN,

THAT GREAT CITY!

Because she made all nations drink of the wine of her
fornication!"†

* Isa. xlix. 6, 23; lx. 1, 2.

† See Appendix (No. 1) for arguments in proof of the Apocalyptic "Babylon" being the Papacy—the whole Papal universal constitution and system as concentrated in Rome, with all its power, ecclesiastical and imperial, spiritual and secular. Papal

9, 10.—The “*third angel*” quickly succeeds, as if with a timely and merciful warning, with “*loud*” entreaties, to all who are still lingering, like Lot in Sodom, and doubting, as Israel in Elijah’s days, between Christ and Belial, and with *threatenings* to the obstinate and rebellious, saying—

“If any man worship the beast and his image,
And receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,
Which is poured out without mixture into the cup of
His indignation;
And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone,
In the presence of the holy angels
And IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB!

11.—“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up
for ever and ever,
And they have no rest day nor night,
Who worship the beast and his image,
And whosoever receiveth the mark of His name!”*

Rome’s dominion may be said to have begun to fall when the “*tenth part*” was separated at the Reformation from allegiance to Romanism (See Rev. xi. 13). The gradual sapping of the “old walls” is going on to the present day (1869), till now scarcely a nation is left in Europe implicitly submitting to her temporal sway, or laying their liberties, civil or religious, at her feet.

* Some have described “*the image of the beast*” as the likeness of pagan idolatry, fashioned and realized in Popery, and substituted for pure and holy religion. Distinctions may be implied by the “*mark in the forehead*,” and that “*in the hand*,” as before, between the “mark of the beast’s name,” and “the number of his name.” These are intended, probably, to denote different degrees of attachment and subserviency to the system of Popery, in whole or in part; (1), all those who seem

12.—“*Here*,” says John, as on a former occasion (ch. xiii. 10), *is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God!*” “*Here*,” in the three flying angels’ successive announcements (1), the progress of the pure and undefiled Gospel through all the nations of the world; (2), the deliverance wrought for all nations in the impending fall of “Babylon;” and (3), the dreadful punishment denounced, as a warning, against all who continue in Babylon, after the judgments of heaven plainly alighting upon her—“*here*,” are good causes for the “need of patience” in days of danger, and that the saints of God should abide *stedfastly* in their pure and sound faith; never to give it up for Popery and idolatry, but to keep close to the “commandments of God,” renouncing and shunning the false “traditions” of men.

13.—The “*voice from heaven*,” now heard in the

thoroughly imbued with devotedness and zeal, to go the whole length of its abominations, as in Ultramontane Jesuits, cardinals, bishops, priests, rulers, magistrates, inquisitors, fanatics, and bigots; (2), those who are less ardent in the cause, nominally professing Romish error without much real care for creeds or dogmas, faith or worship of any kind; (3), those who belong to the Eastern, or Greek branch, who are opposed to many parts of the Papal system, in doctrine and worship, yet have the mark of “*apostasy*” fully manifest in *idolatrous* and corrupt principles and practices; and, finally, those *Romanizers* in Protestant countries, who, while belonging to our reformed Church by profession, and eating her bread, are Romanists in heart, and doing Rome’s work and longing for *reunion*.

Church by its representative and faithful apostle, is doubtless that which proceeded from many true, undaunted and earnest witnesses for Christ,* after the reformed doctrines began to spread, and were fearfully persecuted by the opposing antichrist; as if to inspire martyr-courage and impart consolation necessary against imminent fiery trials, saying, "*Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do;*"† for

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
From henceforth Yea, saith the Spirit:
That they may rest from their labours;
And their works do follow them."

Yes: "*from henceforth!*" saith the spirit of God—from *the very moment* when the tried soul is released from its clayey tenement, however the poor mortal tabernacle may have been pulled to pieces in the enemy's iron grasp; by the stake, or by the halter, by the sword or by the fire, by the rack or dungeon-torture—from that moment, *without an interval of further pain*, "*from henceforth*"—*without fear of any purgatorial flames, invented by Popery to frighten her victims*, the ransomed "*souls of the beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the*

* The godly and weak brethren, in the sixteenth century, were encouraged in their constancy by such able champions of the faith as, (besides the noble Luther), Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, and John Calvin. In our own favoured country by Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Farrar, &c.

† Luke xii. 4.

*word of God,"** and all others like them, are in joy and felicity! Their *happy* spirits are at once conveyed to "Paradise;" as soon as they depart hence, they are there with Christ, which is far better; never more to be disturbed, they enter into their rest; their labours and toils are all over; their record is on high; their work of faith, and labour of love, their holiness of life and their testimony unto death—all "*follow them*"—and appear as evidence before angels and saints, that they "*are the blessed of the Lord, for ever and ever.*"†

O that we may follow the honoured company of "saints" as they followed Christ, in all virtuous and godly loving, in faith and patience unto the end, that we may be with them, when we have done with the trials of earth, and have put off this "the earthly house of our tabernacle" in dissolution; and being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," may enter into those

* See Rev. xx. 4, 6. A special blessing appears reserved for those who have willingly surrendered their lives for Christ's sake, *or who have been ready and prepared to do so.*

† Isa. lvii. 1, 2; Philip. i. 23. Bishop Newton thinks that the expression, "*from henceforth,*" points more especially to the Reformation-age of the Church, when the false doctrine of purgatory was refuted and discarded. "*Their works,*" as done for Christ and in His name, by His Spirit and through faith in His blood, want no further "purgatory" of cleansing; they are at once accepted, through their complete *justification.* (See Matt. xxv. 35, &c.)

unspeakable joys and glories which God has prepared “from henceforth — *for all them that unfeignedly love Him.*”

“What must it be to dwell above,
At God's right hand, where Jesus reigns,
Since the sweet earnest of His love
O'erwhelms us on these earthly plains !
No heart can think, no tongue explain,
What bliss it is with Christ to reign !

When sin no more obstructs our sight,
When sorrow pains our hearts no more,
How shall we view the Prince of Light,
And all His works of grace explore !
What heights and depths of love Divine
Will then through endless ages shine !

This is the heaven I long to know :
For this with patience would I wait,
Till, weaned from earth and all below,
I mount to my celestial seat,
And wave my palm and wear my crown,
And with ‘the elders’ cast them down !”

REV. XIV. 14—20.

THE WHITE CLOUD.—CROWNED ANGEL WITH THE SHARP SICKLE.—THE HARVEST OF EARTH REAPED.—THE CLUSTERS OF THE (WILD) VINE GATHERED.—THE WINEPRESS OF GOD'S WRATH.—THE SPACE TRODDEN.

14.—And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15.—And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16.—And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17.—And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18.—And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19.—And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20.—And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

14.—We have recently seen victory, rejoicing, and blessedness secured to the chosen of Christ's holy Church, after various trials of their faith, and declared loudly, as by “a voice from heaven.”* Now we observe the tokens of defeat to the adverse faction, their judgment and condign punishment equally visible, fixed, and certain.

The “*white cloud*”—the prominent object first arresting the seer's wrapt attention—is a well-known symbol of the splendour and majesty of the Divine Presence, the appropriate seat of the Son of God coming in judgment upon His adversaries.† One like unto “*the Son of man*”—the

* See ch. xiv. 2, 7, 13.

† See Matt. xvii. 5; Rev. i. 7, x. i.; also Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Acts i. 9. “*Coming in the clouds of heaven,*” is the expression descriptive of the coming of Christ in his second advent, for the judgment upon the antichristian and wicked opponents of His kingdom—gathering out, through the ministry of His angels, “*all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*” (Matt. xiii. 41, 42.)

usual appellation given to the “Son of God,” when His office of Judge of mankind is brought particularly to view*—is beheld seated on the “white cloud.” A “*golden crown*” is on His head, betokening the heavenly and just exercise of His sovereignty, in the particular events that follow;† and a “*sharp sickle*” is in His hand, as being ready to execute some sharp and quick punishment upon the offenders, even all who will not obey the gentle sway of the Gospel, and own His Kingly authority.

15.—He has *three angels*, prepared and commissioned from the Father, as administrators of His just power; to carry into effect successively, and thus, in a measure, forbearingly, the high behests of heaven. The *first* in this order is one who

* See Ezek. i. 26; Dan. vii. 13; Rev. i. 13. These decide the appearance here to be that of One representing the *Lord Jesus Christ Himself*, and no created being. “Son of man,” is not only the favourite term used by our Lord concerning Himself; but it is that which especially shows that “the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son;” because the Son knows, *as man*, what mortal man is, and that He might gain the honour of mankind equally with the Father. (John v. 22, 23; also Matt. xxiv. 27; xxv. 31.)

† The *single “crown,”* here, is distinct from the “*many crowns*,” seen on His head (Rev. xix. 12) in a subsequent stage of his judgments and victories, and proves, indirectly, that this *reaping vision* is not the token of the last great harvest of the earth just preceding the millenium (Rev. xix. 20), but of some *intermediate* and progressive visitations, as by three succeeding angels of justice, upon antichrist and his followers.

appears to proceed “*out of the temple,*” from the presence-court of the Most High, as from the Church on this lower earth, and bearing a command from God the Father to the Son,* in such words as these—

“Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap!

For the time is come for Thee to reap!

For the harvest of the earth is *ripe*!”†

16.—The “*first*” of the great acts of judgment upon Babylon, is signified under the figure of the “sharp sickle” thrust in “*on the earth,*” and “*the earth reaped.*”‡ The first sharp judgment upon the (Roman) earth, appears as if executed by direct visitation from the Father in heaven, and by “the Son of man,” the Judge among the nations.

* This is quite in accordance with other representations in the New Testament, where the “*Son of Man,*” though likewise “*Son of God,*” performs, as Messiah and Redeemer among men, the offices, in subordination to and vindication of the Father’s will, of all justice, goodness, righteousness, and truth. (John iii. 16, 17; v. 19; x. 18; xii. 49; xiv. 31.)

† “*Ripe*”—marginal reading, “*dried*” thoroughly, “*ξηρανθεν*”—as if like “*the tares,*” dried and ready for the fire.

‡ “*The earth,*” throughout the Apocalypse almost invariably is the Roman earth, or empire of the Roman Church. It is not “*the harvest*” of the world, at the end of the age (Matt. xiii. 30, 39); but the *judicial cutting down* of the hardened and unbelieving, as referred to, Joel iii. 13, 14—

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe;

Come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow;

For their wickedness is great!”

The whole imagery of the “*sharp sickle*” in the hand of the Judge, and the striking parallelism from Joel, of the harvest of

The first and greatest blow which the Popedom has received in modern times—and this vision properly takes us to a time somewhat beyond the era of the Reformation—may date, without much doubt, near the end of the eighteenth century; when the *great French revolution** gave a check to the Papacy, such as she never felt before, both in her temporal and spiritual sovereignty; from which she has never recovered; and which appears the certain forerunner of her future, signal, and final overthrow. It has been strikingly remarked of these fearful times, in harmony with the words of this prophecy, that “*men fell before the cannon and the sword, as corn falls in harvest before the sickle of the reaper.*”†

the vintage, forbid the idea of the one being the gathering in of the righteous, and the other the judgment on the wicked; however we may allow, that when the wicked oppressors are being punished, the righteous who are delivered may “rejoice” before God. (Prov. xi. 10; compare Rev. xiv. 1—8, and xv. 2—4.)

* The first portion of the *judgment* upon Rome, the mystic Babylon, may date from A.D. 1789 to 1793, when the King, Louis XVI., was beheaded, and “*the reign of terror*” began.

† “The state of Europe,” about the time of the French Revolution, “was lamentable. Protestants, as well as Papists, seem generally to have forgotten the Lord; no fruits of righteousness were brought forth—the harvest was dried up, for infidelity and blasphemy had overspread the earth. The *time* for reaping had arrived, and, at the cry of the angel out of the temple, the sharp sickle was thrust into the earth.” (Skcen’s “Unscaled Prophecy.”)

17.—In the successive judgments upon the Roman earth and Popery—considered as pourtrayed *in outline* in the vision before us, but more in detail at the pouring out of “*the seven vials*,” (ch. xvi. 17)—we do not observe a precipitate progress in the course of events ; but delay, pause, and forbearance, from one stage to another, as is the usual course of God’s judgments, giving time and opportunity for repentance and amendment. Thus, the “*second angel*” in the vision is beheld coming out from “*the temple which is in heaven*,” having, or holding, also, a sharp sickle ; as if only preparing for another infliction of the stroke of punishment, and delaying the execution for a season, till summoned by the voice from the inner shrine. The Church of God receives her Lord’s warning from the “*harvest-reaping of the earth*” just accomplished before the “*vintage*,” and coming soon in more terrible visitations to punish the infidelity and apostasy of the age ; when “*great Babylon*” also would be brought into more special remembrance.* The godly part of the Church, it is well known, were roused from their spiritual lethargy, about the beginning of the nineteenth century ; when numerous publications were issued from the press in defence of Protestant truth, and in exposure of Romish error ; and many of our most honoured religious societies and missions sprang into life

* Rev. xvi. 19.

and vigour, for the maintenance and propagation of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

18.—The "*third angel*" in this scene, appears coming out "*from the altar*" of burnt offering, where the work of a great sacrifice has been effected, and where the "*souls*" of the *martyrs* were before observed† by St. John, and heard to say, "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth?*"‡—

The time of this avenging is now come. The harvest is passed. The summer is ended; and the Church is not saved, nor delivered out of Babylon. The grapes are red. The clusters are ripe. The Lord, the Owner of the vineyard, comes

* From about the period A.D. 1800, may be dated the foundation of several great societies, as the Christian Knowledge, Religious Tract, British and Foreign Bible, Church Mission, and other Missionary Societies to the heathen; the London and British for "promoting Christianity among the Jews," &c. &c. Much was done about that time, and subsequently, by the truly Protestant and Evangelical efforts for the revival of religion made by such writers as W. Wilberforce, M.P., Miss Hannah Moore, and such sound and able divines as Romaine, Scott, Henry, Cecil, Venn, J. and C. Wesley, Whitfield, Simeon, Bickersteth, Marsh, &c. &c.

† See under "*fifth seal*," Rev. vi. 9—11—"having power over fire," also ch. viii. 1—5; xi. 5; xix. 15, which may refer to the "fiery trials" of God's servants, and the increased and more destructive use of fire-weapons in the wars.

‡ The answer of the Judge to the former inquiry seems here brought to view by the mention of the same altar for sacrifice, and the power, or authority over its fire.

out of His place. He gives the word to the commissioned "angel," and also to each minister and agent of His mighty and irresistible power, saying—

"Thrust in thy sharp sickle!
And gather the clusters of the vine of the earth!
For her grapes are fully ripe!"

19.—The work is done, as commanded. The sickle is thrust forth. The earth's vine is gathered, and the grapes are cast into the

"GREAT WINEPRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD!"*

The gathering, treading, and crushing of the grapes, are acts in a subsequent portion of this prophecy, towards its close, and with the judgment executed on great Babylon, ascribed to the Son of God Himself; as the presiding Judge, seen by John, crowned and seated on the "white cloud" (ver. 1), and afterwards† beheld *coming with His attendant angels and saints, all on white horses, and treading "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."*

We may, therefore, consider this closing scene of the vintage, either as preparatory to, or a portion of that which is finally to come and complete the

* *The vintage*, and its treading in "the winepress," are always descriptive in prophecy of the destruction of enemies in battle, and great carnage accompanying it. See Isa. xvii. 4—6; Jer. xlix. 9; Lam. i. 15; Joel iii. 9, 13, and the remarkable passage Isa. lxiii. 1—6 (alluded to in note to ver. 20).

† Rev. xix. 11—21.

work of God in the earth, for the deliverance of His Church, for the crushing of the unbelieving and ungodly, and the treading down of *antichrist and all his ways!* According to the lines of an old author—

“Lo, antichrist, with all his ways,
By CHRIST the LORD, destroy’d shall be!
To CHRIST alone be all the praise,
Who comes to save and set us free!

We know JEHOVAH will maintain
The cause which He accounts His own!
The CHRIST of GOD shall ever reign,
And antichrist be overthrown!”

20.—The strong words respecting the “treading of the winepress,” and its being called “*blood*,” would seem to refer in its *finality*, to some great and terrible outpouring of judicial wrath from heaven, in the wars of nations, of which we have scarcely seen as yet the full accomplishment. If we are to judge from similar hyperboles used in the description of great and sanguinary battles —“the blood reaching to the horses’ bridles, and extending over many miles”^{*}—it would remind us of the great battle of nations called “Armageddon,”

* “This,” says Bp. Newton, “is a strong hyperbolical way of speaking not unknown to the Jews, for the Jewish Talmud describing the awful slaughter which the Roman Emperor Adrian made of the Jews at the destruction of the city of Bitter, saith that “the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils.” He observes, also (quoting from Mr. Mede on this prophecy), “that the states of the Roman Church, or St. Peter’s Patrimony, which

which is yet to come.* But it may be here figuratively applied, as in many prophetic instances, and by anticipation on a parallel scale,† it may be considered that *the wars of bloodshed and devastation* carried on by Napoleon Bonaparte over the whole of the Continent of Europe, and beyond *the limits of the Roman earth*, “*without the city*,” extending to Palestine, Egypt, and other

reacheth from the walls of Rome unto the River Po and the marshes of Verona, contains the space of 200 Italian miles which make exactly 1,600 furlongs.” Others have referred this space to the *Holy Land*, which is about the same extent in miles.

* Rev. xvi. 16.

† The parallelism of two events, especially where one is a sure consequence of the other, *under the same prophecy*—one on a smaller, the other on a larger scale—is common in the Scriptures, and particularly in the Apocalypse. See, for example, Rev. vi. 12—17, before noted, and Isa. lxiii. 1—4, where *the atonement by Christ on the cross, and the final subdual of antichrist* thereby, are combined in the bold figures employed—

“Who is this that cometh from Edom?

With dyed garments from Bozrah?

This that is glorious in his apparel,

Travelling in the greatness of his strength?—

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save!

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,

And thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

I have trodden the winepress alone;

And of the people there was none with me!

For I will tread them in mine anger,

And trample them in my fury!

And their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments,

And I will stain all my raiment!—

For the day of vengeance is in mine heart,

And the year of my redeemed is come!”

countries (between the years A.D. 1800 and 1815), are quite sufficient to justify the strong expressions used in the striking symbolical language of this prophecy.* These wars all tended, we know,† very much to weaken the hold which the Papacy had kept, as by a death-grasp, upon the minds and consciences of mankind. But, ever since that period, religious liberty and civil enlightenment, by the blessing of a gracious Providence and the continuance of peace, have enabled “people and nations” one after another, *to throw off the unnatural yoke*, and to rise out of the sleep of the dark ages; to feel sensible of the monstrous weight with which they have been crushed; to detect the enormous imposture by which they have been duped; and to renounce, almost to a man, Rome’s impious “CONCORDATS,” and, like men, pronounce themselves “FREE!”‡ to leave the *sour grapes of her wild vine* to the last winepress-crushing, which they richly require, and which they will certainly receive!

Let us learn, as we revolve these things in our minds, to keep clear of the miserable beguilements

* The subject is taken up more fully, as will be seen, under the “*vines*” of ch. xvi., and in ch. xvii.

† It is a subject of most recent and notorious occurrence, even within the last *few years*, how one country after another, —Italy, Austria, and, last, the most priest-ridden Spain—has thrown off the Papal supremacy.

and delusions of this doomed apostasy and tyranny of Rome! Let us no longer doubt, but be convinced that her day of judgment is come; the assize is prepared, and has been preparing, as we see, for nearly a century. God has been patient. Nevertheless, her doom is fixed, for she will not repent. She cannot long escape. "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." The Ruler of mankind holds over her the balances of stern equity. As she has shed much blood of man, so by man shall she have much blood shed. This has already begun. The reapers have come forth. The "sharp sickle" has been thrust into the dried corn, and cut down the harvest of "tares" ready for the burning. The grape-gatherers have found nothing but wild grapes. The clusters are cut. They are being cast into the "*winepress of the wrath of God!*" O come forth in time out of Babylon! all ye that desire to deliver your own souls. Let every one who really wishes for self-preservation, avoid the very precincts of the devoted city; let him "touch not the unclean thing," and hate the very sight of the "spotted garment;"* lest, being defiled with the dangerous contact, he be involved in the impending ruin; and, sharing in her sin, he be made also to partake of her sorrow, shame, and punishment.

* See Jude, 23.

“Brief life is here our portion,
Brief sorrow, short-liv'd care !
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is THERE !
Oh happy retribution !
Short toil, eternal rest ;
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest !

E'en martyrdom hath roses,
Upon this heavenly ground !
And white and virgin lilies
For virgin-souls abound !
There grief is turned to pleasure,
Such pleasure, as below
No human voice can utter,
No human heart can know !

And now we watch and struggle,
And now we live in hope ;
And “Zion,” in her anguish,
With Babylon must cope :
But He Whom now we trust in,
Shall then be seen and known ;
And they that know and see Him,
Shall have Him for “their own !”

REV. XV. 1—8.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.—SEA OF GLASS, AND
THE HARPERS.—SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE
LAMB.—TEMPLE OPENED.—SEVEN ANGELS IN
WHITE.—SEVEN GOLDEN VIALS GIVEN.

AND I saw another sign in heaven,
great and marvellous, seven angels
having the seven last plagues; for in them
is filled up the wrath of God. 2.—And I
saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with
fire: and them that had gotten the victory
over the beast, and over his image, and
over his mark, *and* over the number of his
name, stand on the sea of glass, having
the harps of God. 3.—And they sing the
song of Moses the servant of God, and the
song of the Lamb, saying, Great and mar-
vellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty;
just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of
saints. 4.—Who shall not fear thee, O
Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only
art holy: for all nations shall come and
worship before thee; for thy judgments
are made manifest. 5.—And after that I
looked, and, behold, the temple of the

tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6.—And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7.—And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8.—And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

1.—“*The third woe cometh quickly,*” was the warning announced to the Church, after the closing virulence of the “*second woe*” in the Eastern or Greek Church; but the men, in whose behalf it was principally intended, “repented not” of their evil ways, words, and deeds, even after the prophesying of “the witnesses,” the preaching of the “everlasting Gospel,” and the fall of the *tenth part* of the civil and religious community.* The “remnant” of the Western or Latin Church still

* The “*third woe*” may be said to follow “*quickly,*” when we consider that the effects and consequences of the “second,” or Turkish woe, are felt, in some measure, to the present day—

continued corrupt, and enslaved under the usurped dominion and idolatrous thralldom of Papal Rome.

The “*sign*” before us, in the third “woe”-trumpet,* is pronounced “*great and marvellous!*” It is the last, or seventh day’s encompassing of doomed Jericho. It is the destined and final settling-blow of God’s judgment on the hardened Pharaoh in Egypt, for keeping the Lord’s people in bondage, in defiance of repeated plagues and Divine visitations. It gives the finishing stroke, from the retributive hand of heaven, to the previous heavy blows and stripes inflicted upon impenitent and unchanged Rome’s “corrupters of the earth!” “*Seven angels,*” having the “*seven last plagues*”—with double significance of the fulfilling of God’s word and work—are seen in the “*temple*” above, as if ready at a moment’s notice to come forth to execute His just sentence of “*wrath,*” upon His guilty enemies, and to avenge, at length, the sufferings of His innocent servants.

2.—*The true friends and servants of God* as new victors over the beast and his image—over Popery in all its forms and aspects—are perceived in the foreground of the scene, as if with the joy of the anticipated triumph of Christ and His

and when the “vials” began to be poured out, soon after the *French Revolution*, it had only ceased in its intensity and power to do mischief, as seen in the symbolic “drying up” of the River Euphrates.

* See Rev. xi. 14; also, ix. 20, 21; x, 11; and xi. 3, 13.

glorious Gospel, over every semblance and assumption of antichrist. They are represented as standing *on a glassy sea**—“*fire*” being seen mingled with it†—and with “*the harps of God*”‡ in their hands, ready to chant His praises.

3.—They unite at once, as if gathered together from all parts of the Christian Church, from among Jews and Gentiles, from Old Testament and New, in singing “*the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*” “The song”—like that of the Israelites under Moses, after the great victory over Pharaoh and his host, drowned in the Red Sea,§ and now attuned anew under Christ, for that greater overwhelming, at

* “*The sea of glass,*” like the brazen sea, in the temple, clear and bright as crystal, typifies purity, tranquillity, and equity.

† “*Fire*” is the well-known symbol of judgment and affliction. (Mark ix. 49, 1 Pet. iv. 12.) Thus, while the “*sea of glass*” displays the “*perfect peace,*” without a ripple of discord and dread, of God’s chosen people, the “*fire*” mingled with it, seems to show that the victory and peace on the one side, were accompanied with severe chastisements on the other. As viewed, too, from Protestant Britain’s peaceful shores—untouched by “the fire” of the enemy in the late Continental wars, though often threatened—as well as from the fact of “*fiery*” persecutions and terrible dangers safely passed through (1) in bloody Mary’s reign (2) from Philip II. of Spain, in good Queen Elizabeth’s reign, (3) in the narrow escape from the *Gunpowder Plot* under James I., and from a return to Popery under James II., with our *liberties* secured under William and Mary, 1688—the figure used above has a peculiar significance.

‡ See Rev. xiv. 1, 2. § Exod. xv. 1—18.

hand, of the tyrant-enemies of the Protestant Church, saying—

4.—“Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord,
And glorify Thy name?
For Thou only art holy!

For all nations shall come and worship before Thee!
For Thy judgments are made manifest!”

5.—“*The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven*”* is declared to be “opened” afresh at this great juncture of the Church’s liberty and enlargement, and in the disasters coming upon her hostile pursuers. The inner sanctuary, where the “*Shekinah*” was seen on the mercy-seat, even the symbol of the majesty of Jehovah’s dwelling between the “cherubims,” testified to faithful Israel *the presence of the Lord* for their protection and blessing. So, on the occasion of the “*harpers*,” on the glassy sea, sending up their thanksgivings to the God of their salvation, they are assured of the Divine presence and favour engaged manifestly on their side, as much as if they beheld the “veil” withdrawn, and the most holy place, with the blood-besprinkled propitiatory exposed to view, free access permitted, and commands to the ministers of His will and pleasure issuing in their behalf.

6.—The “*seven*” ministering “*angels*” come forth from the presence and at the word of the

* See Rev. xi. 19; Acts vii. 44; Heb. ix. 3. The “*temple*,” here, is the most holy place of the whole temple-courts.

Lord. Like “priests” of the Most High, in the olden times, who alone could serve in the sanctuary, they were all clad in *linen, pure and white*;* representing a “*holy priesthood*,” derived from the just God, heavenly in its origin, and “blameless” in its exercise. They had “*golden girdles*,” like their Lord’s,† round their waists and across their breasts; and “*golden vials*” in their hands, showing that the instrumentality, on which they are engaged continually, concerns the true Church of Christ, and the golden treasure of the pure Gospel. The “*vials*” contain the “*seven plagues*” which they were commissioned from heaven to execute, in defence of the golden treasure of the word,‡ and to confound its gainsayers and all propagators of erroneous and false doctrines.

7.—The “*seven vials*” are put into the hands of the angels as administrators in the Church and in the earth of the righteous government of God, the ETERNAL AND “ALL-TERRIBLE KING.” This is done by one of the “four living creatures” who were seen§ before, the representatives of the ministers of the justice, power, goodness and majesty of Jehovah, in the universal creation; deeply concerned in the affairs of mankind, and in the redeemed Church of Christ in the world.

* See Rev. iii. 4, vii. 13.

† Rev. i. 13.

‡ James ii. 3, Rev. iii. 18.

§ Rev. iv. 6—8.

8.—Upon this, the inner “*temple*” is filled with a thick pillar of cloud, like “*smoke*,”* around the mercy-seat, “*from the glory of the Lord, and from His power*,” so that every man, unholy and unconverted, is excluded, confounded, and unable to come near, though *the temple is opened to others*; while the plagues are being out-poured on the guilty earth, and while the godly portion of the Church at the same time—“*the harpers*” on the glassy sea—have the light, unclouded, of “the pillar of fire” by night, “beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord” IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Let us see, as we contemplate the subject now before us—the scene of joy and peace, light and grace from the just and merciful God to His true children, on the one side—of grief and dismay, darkness and confusion to the enemies of His name, on the other—how necessary it is to be

* See Exod. xiv. 19, 20. The “*pillar*,” which was “*cloud and darkness*” to the Egyptians in their pursuit of the children of Israel, became “*light by night*” to the chosen of God against their enemies.

With regard to the inability to enter the cloud-covered temple (verse 8) it has been remarked—“The boundary-line in the map of Europe, between Popery and Protestantism, has scarcely undergone the slightest alteration for the last 300 years. Individuals may have left one Church for the other, but, as *nations*, they still hold the Protestant or Popish Creed as they did in the days of Luther.” Those kingdoms which have recently thrown off the *sovereignty* of the Pope—Italy, Austria, Spain—still profess the Roman Catholic faith.

decided followers of “*the faith once delivered to the saints* ;” to shun the Laodicean practice, too common in modern times, of dallying with Rome, and holding aloof from those who take a determined Protestant stand as “harpers” on the sea of glass,” and worshippers in the inner temple of “the Eternal God !” By such trimming to the dangerous system of worldly love and time-serving expediency — by such timidity of tenderness towards the convicted apostasy and avowed enemy of God’s best servants, how can we bear a claim, for a moment, to the character of “*witnesses for God*,” or “*harpers*” of His praise? — praise for the avenging of the blood of the slain, and for the great deliverance of His people out of Babylonish captivity ?

Let us be true and hearty, firm and determined, in our zeal for the honour of Christ, and our desire of sharing in the joyful triumph at the coming overthrow of antichrist ! Then shall we take the timbrel, like Miriam the sister of Aaron, and wake up, with them, “the song of Moses and of the Lamb.” Then, also, in the spirit of Deborah and Barak, with “*the harpers*” on Mount Zion,* on the sea of glass, and, finally, with the “redeemed of the Lord” out of “all nations, and kindreds, and people,” we shall not be *backward or unlearned* in the loud-resounding praise !

* See Rev. xiv. 1—3.

“Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea,
Jehovah hath triumph’d! His people are free!
Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots and horsemen, all splendid and brave!
How vain was their boasting!—The Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are dash’d in the grave!

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword!
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?—
The Lord hath looked out from His pillar of glory,
And all the brave thousands are dash’d in the tide!

Praise to the MIGHTY KING, bless ye His name!
Whose ways are all goodness, all-glorious His fame!
Come, bow at His feet, nor longer be fearful;
Ye men of His choice, the work of His hand!
No longer lament, He bids you be cheerful,—
His “marvellous” power, what force can withstand?—
Sound the glad “harp” on the “Red” glassy sea!
JEHOVAH hath triumph’d! His people are free!”

REV. XVI. 1—9.

THE GREAT VOICE OUT OF THE TEMPLE.—FIRST VIAL POURED ON THE EARTH.—SECOND, ON THE SEA.—THIRD, ON RIVERS AND FOUNTAINS.—FOURTH, ON THE SUN.—THE MEN SCORCHED.—NO GIVING GLORY TO GOD.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2.—And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image. 3.—And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea. 4.—And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5.—And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6.—For they have shed the

blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7.—And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments. 8.—And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9.—And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

1.—The “*seventh trumpet*” is now sounding about the walls of the great city, “Babylon,” as formerly, at the last circuit of priests and people of the Lord round Jericho: one of its blasts is represented in the “*great voice*” out of the temple, addressed to the “seven angels,” with the seven last “vials,”* to *go their ways* and “pour them out upon the earth.”

* The Greek word “φιάλη”—“vial,” resembles rather a *bowl*, or *basin*, than what we understand by *vial*. The *bowl*, or *basin*, gives a better idea of the comparative rapidity with which each judgment of the “vials” would be accomplished, by the pouring out of its contents at once, and with very little delay. The whole of the “*seven vials*” may be said to be comprised within the compass of a *Century*—the first *four* or *five* even within the space of *twenty* years.

2.—The first vial-angel steps forth from among the seven, and obeys the command which was given him from the mandate of the Most High, the infallible Ruler of His Church, and pours out his vial “*upon the (Roman) earth.*”

Like the plague on literal Egypt, when Moses and Aaron were directed to scatter the ashes of the furnace toward heaven, and “it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon “beast,”* and *the magicians themselves* could not escape the effects of the grievous sore; so we observe, in Apocalyptic “*Egypt*,” the taskmaster of God’s people and murderer of her “little-ones,” the malignant “ulcer” of revolutionary and infidel principles breaks out from the direct visitation of an insulted God, over the land of the oppressor—the *Papal kingdom of France*, first, as having most recently steeped her hands deep in innocent blood, expelled God’s believing servants from her coasts,† and demolished their

* Exod. ix. 9, 10.

† The *retributive justice* of God is most conspicuous in all the “*vials*” of His “*wrath*,” and especially is it seen in the *first*. France was the scene of the great massacre of “Huguenot” Protestants, begun on the eve of St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24th, 1572, under Charles IX., in which from 70,000 to 100,000 persons are said to have been put to death, and most of them in cold blood. So, also, at the infamous *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, under Louis XIV., on October 22nd, 1685, when thousands of her most earnest, industrious, and peaceable citizens suffered, and were driven from their native land to seek an asylum in England, Holland, and other Protestant countries.

churches, at the bidding of Rome.* The intensity of this scourge—produced, in great measure, by the idolatrous creed, superstitious practices, and spiritual despotism of the Papal Church—spread through all ranks and grades of society; the monarchy, aristocracy, and also the priesthood suffering from the carnage and havoc, physical and spiritual, of its malignant and murderous effects.†

3.—The "*second vial*" follows closely upon the

* The Papacy was the instigator and the great rejoicing party, both in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day (1572), and in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). At the former, we read, "Rome was thrown into a delirium of joy at the news: the cannon were fired at St. Angelo; Gregory, and his cardinals, went in procession from sanctuary to sanctuary to give God thanks for the massacre. The subject was ordered to be painted, and *a medal was struck*, with the Pope's image on one side, and the destroying angel on the other immolating the Huguenots." At the latter, "great was the rejoicing of the Jesuits on the Revocation, &c.: Rome sprung up with a shout of joy to celebrate the event. 'Te Deums' were sung, processions went from shrine to shrine, and the Pope sent a brief to Louis, conveying to him the congratulations and praises of the Romish Church." (See Smiles' "*Huguenots*"—a very interesting, well-written work.)

† For three years and more, from A.D. 1789 to 1793, revolutionary France was subject to a "reign of terror," to which there is scarcely a parallel in all history. It has been called, almost in the words of this prophecy, "the malignant French distemper, the fever of aggravated Jacobinism"—"that tremendous outbreak of social and moral evil—of democratic fury, atheism, and vice, of which the ultimate source was in the long and deep-rooted corruption and irreligion of the people."

first,* and is “*poured out upon the sea.*” This, like the second (war) trumpet, is seen to affect more especially the *maritime* parts of the Papal empire—the powers possessing colonies and maritime dependencies—such as France, Spain, and Portugal.

The noisome and grievous sore, “the blotch of Egypt,” was seen in the revolutionary and atheistic malaria prevalent under the first vial, and affecting principally the body politic and ecclesiastic of France.

Each ruler of France, since the time of Charlemagne (A.D. 800), has been styled “*the eldest son of the Church,*”—that country being the stronghold and great support of the Popedom.† In the judgments upon “*the beast,*” and the pulling down of “*Babylon,*” it was to be expected that the first and severest trouble, leading on to the full crisis of “*woe,*” should take place in that

* There seems in the prophetic narrative such a quick succession as scarcely to imply any interval of time. The agency of the second plague upon the Papacy and its allies may be said to begin to be felt before the influences operating from the “first” had ceased. *The events of the two almost overlap each other. The locality of this scourge is that which undergoes the chief change.*

† The Papal dominion had its chief reliance, in former times, upon France; and the state of all Europe has been, in a manner, determined by the condition of France.—“A revolution in France,” said Napoleon Bonaparte, “is soon followed by a revolution in Europe.” (See Alison’s “Hist. of Europe.”)

part of Papal Christendom; as well as from a consideration, before noticed, of the grievous persecutions of God's people, of which she had been previously found guilty.

As the "*first vial*" was poured "*upon the earth*," affecting chiefly the Continental parts with a painful (internal) disorder pervading and devastating all classes of society; so, the "*second*," being poured "*on the sea*," shows the plague of this Divine judgment to be of a more extended nature, causing ruin and destruction to rage abroad on the sea—in its coasts, colonies, and islands.

The revolutionary and infidel mania in France, and the violent proceedings of the infatuated Directory, produced the following state of things: (1) The coloured population of St. Domingo revolted in 1792, and a war of twelve years' duration ensued, in which 60,000 of the blacks perished, but their island became independent.* In requital for the attack upon our beloved Protestant Britain, through the boastful "*Armada*" chiefly planned and equipped by France and Spain, these two countries *suffered most severely* in their maritime arm of strength, from the war declared against us by France in 1793, and continued, with slight intermission, for above twenty

* St. Domingo expelled the French from their coasts in 1804, and was then declared an independent Negro Republic.

years.* It has been testified by credible naval historians,† that during this period—the range of this vial-plague upon "*the sea*"—there were destroyed nearly 200 ships of the line, of smaller vessels of war and ships of commerce almost an incredible number, besides the incalculable loss of human lives, in the disastrous defeats sustained by the enemy; so that, in the figurative language of the prophecy, the sea, "became as the blood of a dead (man);" "the blood of thousands and tens of thousands was *poured out like water on every side*;‡ till one might almost conceive that it

* Some of the great naval battles, in which our little Protestant island gained splendid laurels of triumph over her Popish enemies, are worthy of mention, as particularly illustrating the preservation of our Protestant throne, Church, and country untouched by the foot of foreign Popish foe through all these trials: (1) Defeat of the French fleet at Toulon by Lord Hood (1793); (2) victory off Ushant by Lord Howe (1794); same year, the taking of Corsica, and smaller Spanish and French islands in the West Indies; Victory by Lord Bridport (1795), and capture of the Cape of Good Hope (after repeated defeats of French and Dutch fleets) under Admiral Elphinstone, Sir Home Popham, and Admiral Lucas; (3) great victory off Cape St. Vincent over Spanish Fleet, and off Camperdown over the Dutch, 1797; lastly, the succession of victories by the brave Lord Nelson—the Nile and Bay of Aboukir (1798), Copenhagen (1801), and Trafalgar (1805).

† See James's "Naval Hist."

‡ "The whole history of the world presents no such a scene and period of naval warfare as that which took its rise from the French Revolution, immediately after that noisome and grievous sore fell upon them that had the mark of the beast." (Dr. Keith.)

produced a state of things, in the crippling of the Papacy and the stagnation of Rome's life-blood, as if "*every living soul in the (Roman) sea died.*"*

4.—In close connexion with the former, follows the "*third angel's vial;*"^J_E and this is poured out

The Romish system was restored in the French Republic soon after 1796, and in Napoleon's elevation to the Consulship a *Concordat* was signed "with the Pope."

* *Two subjects* are to be kept well in view throughout the Apocalypse, and especially in "*the vials;*" first, the *physical and political*; second, the *moral and religious* aspect of God's judgments and their effects. Some writers take one, and some the other, and so create unintentional disagreement; whereas the full truth seems to consist in *taking both*. The sea "*becoming as the blood of a dead (man)*" &c.—different from that before-mentioned under the second trumpet (Rev. viii. 9.)—is a remarkable expression, showing not only how destructive to human life at sea were the bloody naval victories gained by England over the Papal powers of France, Spain, &c., (particularly between 1793 and 1805, which is about the range of this second vial); but, also, what a state of *moral torpor and spiritual death* prevailed, what cessation of all the functions of spiritual life, amid the turbulent "sea" of nations and the Popish countries above-named, from the mass of putridity and disease consequent upon the anarchy, atheism, and infidelity engendered and fostered by Popery. It has been rightly shown, from history and experience, *to the present day*, that "*Popery and Infidelity ever go hand in hand together: in every question affecting religion the infidel supports the Papist and the Papist the infidel.*" "Where the Scriptures are withheld from the laity and the authority of the Church and of the priest is substituted for the authority of the word of God, there infidelity meets with a congenial soil." (See Jenour on "Apocalypse," vol. ii. p. 184.)

“upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.”

While drops of the “second vial” are still falling and raging upon the waters of the great sea, commission is given to a great Republican general, by the infidel Directory of France, to invade the Austrian dominions and *the North of Italy*, by what were termed “the armies of the Rhine and of Italy.” The chief “rivers and fountains of waters,” on the one side, were the Rhine, Loire, Seine, and the sources of the Rhine and the Danube; on the other, were the Po, Ticino, Adda, Bormida, Mincio, Adige, Tagliamento, &c. Hither, while the formidable and victorious fleets of Britain were watching against the progress of the French in the Mediterranean, and guarding its chief ports; NAPOLEON BONAPARTE now coming prominently forward on the stage of history and of prophecy—like Attila, of old, “the scourge of God”†—fired with the ardour of martial prowess and adventure, leads forward the armies entrusted to him, and lays waste the fertile hills and plains of Italy.‡

* See Exod. viii. 17, 19, 20.

† Rev. viii. 10—14.

‡ The *plains of Lombardy*, watered with innumerable fertilizing streams, and *Piedmont*, the region of rivers and their sources, were speedily overrun and devastated by Napoleon’s troops. Neither Rome, Austria, nor Russia, could effectually succeed in stopping the rapid course of conquest; from 1796 to 1800, victories and massacres quickly follow one another; such as at Dego, Lodi, Pavia, Benasco, Lugo, Milan, Marengo, Tagliamento,

5, 6.—“*The angel of the waters,*” or that special minister of Divine justice, represented as presiding over the execution of this vial-plague poured out upon the “rivers and fountains of waters,” is here noticed by John, addressing an ascription of adoring praise, like the voice of a grateful and faithful company in the Church of God, on viewing the perfect justice of these sore chastisements upon a guilty, idolatrous, blood-thirsty race—

“Thou art righteous, O Lord!

Which art, and wast, and shalt be!

Because Thou hast judged thus! *—

For they shed the blood of saints and prophets,

And Thou hast given them blood to drink!” †

Venice, Rome; *the Pope was made prisoner and had to pay a million sterling, and cede some of the States of the Church, with many of his finest pictures and statues, and a large supply of stores, to Bonaparte and the French.*

* The blood of “*saints and prophets*, people and preachers of the pure Gospel of Christ, had been shed, in large measure, A.D. 1655, through the influence of the Duke of Savoy (Charles Emmanuel II.), the Emperor of Germany (Ferdinand III.), and the Pope of Rome (Innocent VIII.) urged on by the Jesuits, near the very parts where the contending armies, in Napoleon’s Italian campaign (1796—1800), had their blood copiously poured out. The “*witnesses*” of Jesus, of the sound *Waldensian* Church, were chiefly persecuted and slaughtered where many of Bonaparte’s fiercest battles were fought, where it is said, “*rivers rolled red amidst the corpses of horses and slain.*” (See Sir W. Scott’s “*Life of Napoleon Bonaparte.*”)

† Our celebrated poet, *Milton*, has immortalized the memory of the sad “*massacre in Piedmont,*” in his ode on the subject,

7.—Another “*voice*,” as if in quick response, and devout ascription of praise, is heard proceeding from the “altar;”* another section of the Church of God recognizing the wrong done to their brethren formerly oppressed, and the righteousness of God’s present retribution, saying—

“Even so, Lord God Almighty!

True and righteous are Thy judgments!”

which seems almost prognostic of this “*vial*” and *the angel’s appeal* to heaven:—

“Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter’d saints, whose bones
Lie scatter’d on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp’d stocks and stones,
Forget not! In Thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll’d
Mother with infant down the rocks. The moans,
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven! Their martyr’d blood and ashes sow
O’er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who, having learn’d Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!”

For much interesting information respecting the “Vaudois,” or Waldensian Church, see Dr. Gilly’s “Waldensian Researches,” 1831, and Dr. Muston’s “Israel of the Alps.”

* See Rev. ix. 13. The religious interest has been deep and wide-spread, as is well-known, throughout all the Protestant Churches in behalf of the persecuted Waldenses, the brave maintainers of Scripture truth, in Italy and Switzerland, against the power of Rome. The atrocities perpetrated against them were so great in 1655, that “Europe was thrilled with horror.”

8.—The “fourth vial” is poured upon the imperial “sun,”* as the central orb of the Papal firmament; with “*power given unto him to scorch men with fire.*” The former head of “the holy Roman empire”—as the Austrian empire in Germany was called—who always received his investiture from the Pope at Rome, *is now no more.* The imperial crown of Charlemagne is placed on his own brow by the conqueror of Italy and of the Pope; while the Pope is brought to Paris, as if in mimicry, to give a kind of religious sanction to the ceremony. The ancient “*iron crown*” of the Lombards is also taken and placed with his own hands on his head, in the cathedral, at Milan, with the ominous words used on the occasion—not unlike those before us—

“God has given it me!
Beware who touches it!”†

“*Power,*” truly, “*was given him!*” The “*sun*” of Napoleon was now in the ascendant (A.D. 1805),

Louis XIV. (the future revoker of the Edict of Nantes, 1685) wrote to the Duke of Savoy, and England took an honourable part both in protecting and relieving the distressed. (See Rev. Bramley More’s “Six Sisters of the Valleys.”)

* Rev. viii. 12.

† The French language was used, as follows—

“Dieu m’a donné!
Gare qui la touche!”

The Coronation of Bonaparte as Emperor of France took place at Paris, May 18th, 1804, and as King of Italy, at Milan, May 26th, 1805.

and speedily, in this vial's outpouring, he executed his work of "*scorching men* (*'the men who had the mark of the beast'*) *with fire!*"* His repeated victories dazzled the eyes of mankind, while his tyranny over the human species brought an intense degree of suffering.

9.—It may be said that, by the blaze of his ambitious and irresistible conquests, according to the language of prophecy, "*the men were scorched with great heat.*" It fell upon them like a *vial-plague* from the very "sun," with "withering blight," to consume the power and punish the sins of the Papacy. Bonaparte's military renown streamed like a comet in the mid-sky. Wherever it appeared, it drew in its fitful course the contagion of inevitable ruin, the torment of insufferable pain. From Naples to Berlin, from Lisbon to Moscow,† there followed in his track

* The Greek is, "*τους αθροπους,*" "to scorch the men"—referring us back, probably, to the same characters designated (ver. 2) "*the men which had the mark of the beast,*" and "*worshipped his image.*" The great use which Napoleon always made of numerous artillery, in gaining battles, may partly explain the term, "*with fire.*" At the great battle of Austerlitz, called "the battle of the Emperors," (December 2nd, 1805) Alexander, Emperor of Russia, and Francis, Emperor of Austria, were completely defeated. Here, it is said, men were especially scorched with the fire of artillery. Here, too, the sun of Napoleon rose to its zenith, and the imperial constitution of Austria, as "*head of the holy Roman empire,*" came to an end, being merged in Napoleon and "*the Confederation of the Rhine.*"

† Some of the principal events of Bonaparte's campaigns and

nothing but the wildest havoc of war—spoliation and extortion, oppression and devastation, with “the misery of millions.” At length, on himself, the spoliator of Europe, “the child of destiny,” the time came for the requital of delayed vengeance. He had done his work. “The stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera.” “The Sun of Austerlitz” was obscured by the snows of Russia. The clouds of the vial-scourge re-acted on the sun itself; at Waterloo his “scorching” ceased in an ignominious flight and timid surrender—

“The desolator desolate;
The victor overthrown;
The arbiter of others’ fate,
A suppliant for his own.”—(Byron.)

career, after “the battle of the Emperors,” may be here recorded:—1806 (October 14th), Russians defeated at Jena, &c.—1807, Conquest of Portugal.—1808, Victory at Burgos, King of Spain dethroned.—1809, Victories in Austria; Abensberg, Landshut, and Eckmühl.—May 17th (1809), Incorporation of Rome with the French empire.—May 21st and 22nd (1809), Victory at Asperne, carnage terrible.—1813 (September, &c.), Battle of Smolensko, seizure of Moscow, burning of Moscow—first dimness of Napoleon’s “star”—disastrous retreat, with loss of nearly *half a million* of men; “*such a calamity, in such an extent, never before darkened the page of history.*”—(Sir W. Scott’s “Life.”)—attacked the Allies at Lutzen, Dresden, and Leipsic where he lost 50,000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners—“sun” quickly declines.—1814—15, Armies were defeated in Spain, Paris was taken by the allies, Napoleon abdicated, escaped from Elba, reign of 100 days.—June 18th (1815), completely routed at Waterloo by Allies under our great WELLINGTON.—1821, “Sun” set in a death-cloud at St. Helena!

At length, on a barren isle of the ocean, and under the guard of Great Britain, he was seen to breathe his last—without a single sign of “*repentance*.”*

The people, too, who suffered from this fierce “*sun*”-stroke and who might have been brought to a better state of mind, as soon as they were relieved from its *great scorching heat*, still “*blasphemed the name of God*,” and refused to acknowledge His hand either in the infliction of the scourge, or in the release from it—“*They gave not God the glory*.” No general turning to God took place; no renunciation of their infidelity and Popery for the pure truth of Protestantism and the sound religion of the Bible. Popery received a mighty and terrible blow; but Papists remained *obdurate* and impenitent.

It becomes all to own the righteous judgments of heaven, and not to remain callously unconcerned; going on still in the old evil ways, defying rebukes, disregarding mercies, and heedless of chastisements. When afflictions, permitted by God for our good, are not allowed to have their proper effect in humbling the soul to deep and deeper contrition and repentance; they must certainly, and judicially, harden and alienate, withdraw and drive farther off from Him who

* When a Bible was laid before Napoleon at St. Helena, by some friend, it is recorded that he thrust it carelessly from him, saying, “he knew all about it.”

ought to be loved, revered, and feared. Let us give all glory to His name; and bow before the sceptre of His boundless wisdom, majesty, and love! All power, let us be convinced, belongeth unto Him—

“He doeth according to His will,
In the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth!
And none can stay His hand,
Or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”*

He can raise up, at any time He pleases, instruments *like Napoleon*, to weaken the power and pull down the pride of the stout-hearted Papacy, and loosen its hold upon the liberties of nations. He can break off the fetters of ages that have dragged down the mind and soul of immortal men and bound them to the slavery and sorceries of Rome. May He do it speedily! And let us not be backward in confiding hope, and firm reliance on His sovereign will and pleasure; and ever *give Him all the glory for His great and wondrous works.*

“Trust to thy God for aid,
In grief to Him repair!
Trust, and be undismay’d,
Seek thou His tender care!
He who directs the way
Of winds, and clouds, and snow,
Shall He not mark the path,
Where safe thy feet may go?”

* Dan. iv. 35.

“O cast away thy fear !
My soul on Him rely !
He, all thy griefs will bear,
To thy requests draw nigh !
Then on His mercy trust,
And wait the joyful hour,
When the bright “Sun” shall rise,
In all its glorious pow’r !

Awake, and bid good night
To griefs that hang around !
Look to the cheering light,
For thee Thy God is found !
What though thou rulest not,
Nor can the clouds dispel,
Our God the whole directs,
And ruleth all things well !”

REV. XVI. 10—21.

FIFTH VIAL UPON THE SEAT OF THE BEAST.—
BLASPHEMING THE GOD OF HEAVEN.—SIXTH VIAL
ON EUPHRATES.—THE WAY OF THE KINGS OF
THE EAST PREPARED.—THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS.
—COMING OF CHRIST AT HAND.—ARMAGEDDON.
—SEVENTH VIAL IN THE AIR.—MIGHTY EARTH-
QUAKE.—GREAT BABYLON IN REMEMBRANCE.

10.—And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11.—And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. 12.—And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13.—And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14.—For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them

to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15.—Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16.—And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. 17.—And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18.—And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. 19.—And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20.—And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21.—And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

10.—The outpouring of the “*Fifth Vial*,” brings us more closely to the internal condition of the Papacy, in its principal “seat,” or throne at Rome;* and while smarting from the effects of the extreme castigations and heavy shocks received under the preceding “vials” from God’s righteous indignation, “*His kingdom was full of darkness*” from the foul doctrines and practices still prevailing, and unamended by misfortunes. Like the “locust”-swarm from the smoke of the abyss, emerging in the Mohammedan apostasy and darkening “the sun and the air,”† so Popery, like the “beast from the sea,”‡ rose up with renewed efforts—when the weight of the affliction under Bonaparte was removed—to darken the sun of truth with her superstitions, and depress the pure air of civil and religious liberty with her freshly-forged chains.§ The banished Pope is restored to

* The seat, or throne, of the “beast,” “*τον θρονον του θηριου*,” that which was said to be given him by the dragon (ch. xiii. 2), the *central seat* of his power, authority, and dominion—Rome and the Vatican.

† See Rev. ix. 1, 2. ‡ Rev. xiii. 1.

§ “On the establishment of the Pope in his dominions, and of Roman Catholic despots on their thrones, incipient religious liberty was crushed, and the reign of DARKNESS returned in all the *fulness* of its power.” (Dr. Keith, vol. ii. p. 314.)

“The reinstitution of the *Inquisition* of the Jesuits, and of monastic orders in the nineteenth century, is a retrograde step in the progress of society.” (See “Rome in the Nineteenth Century,” vol. ii. p. 174.)

his “seat” among the “seven hills.” And, again, before the light had time to break fully in, upon the hearts of men, the obscuring influence of Rome’s pestilent doctrines overspread the mind; superstition and slavery began anew their work of death. Italy again falls under the galling yoke of bigoted Austria; and, with that yoke, political liberty vanishes; civil and religious freedom, and even freedom of thought, disappears. “Italy is crushed; she is chained, and covered with blood. . . . Spain and Portugal are sunk in similar ignorance and superstition, and are associated with Italy in misery as in darkness.”*

11.—There is no mark of national repentance, or Papal humiliation, or Church reform; but rather a deeper sinking into the abyss of anti-christian transgressions against God; greater arrogance and presumption on the part of Rome, and increased progress towards infidel principles throughout the nations still outwardly adhering to the temporal and spiritual thralldom of the apostasy. The “beast” still bears upon his spared horns “the names of blasphemy,”† and the people

* See Sismondi’s “Italian Republic,” and Dr. Keith’s “Signs.” Ferdinand of Spain, and Miguel of Portugal, were both distinguished (1814 to 1820) for great barbarities, arising from their bigoted and tyrannical Popish principles. Imprisonment, banishment, and death may be said to have drawn forth from thousands the voice of agony and despair; as though men “gnawed their tongues” for pain and sore affliction, and blasphemed the name of the God of heaven. † Rev. xiii. 1, 5.

and nations submit to have it so. The "darkness" in Pharaoh's kingdom is such as may be "felt;" but release and deliverance have not yet come to God's "Israel," though *it may not be far off!**

12.—The "*Sixth*" angel pours out his vial "upon the great river *Euphrates*, and the water thereof was dried up." In this announcement, the scene is evidently changed from the West to the East; from the kingdoms of the Latin empire and the "throne" of the beast, and the States of the Romish Church, to the *Turkish empire*, the Eastern "*antichrist*," with his usurped European and Asiatic domination. The Turkish Mohammedan power has been a festering ulcer in the sides of the Church ever since the taking of Constantinople from the Greeks, A.D. 1457.†

The figurative *drying up of the water of the great river Euphrates*—the source from whence the "Turkish woe" prophetically sprang, implies the *gradual exhaustion of the false prophet's territorial, political, and religious influence in the East*;‡

* Exod. x. 21—23. The plague of "*darkness*," in Egypt, was the last before the slaying of the first-born and the deliverance of Israel out of bondage.

† See Rev. ix. 13, 15. The sixth vial bears analogy with the sixth trumpet, as before noticed with regard to the other vials and trumpets.

‡ "*Waters*," as of sea or rivers, are described as representing "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Rev. xvii. 15.)

the waning of the "Turkish Crescent," whose pale and false light has usurped, for centuries, the place of the true and bright Cross in countries rendered sacred and dear by the footsteps of our blessed Redeemer, and by the early, successful, and self-devoted labours of His apostles.

Since A.D. 1820, insurrections and troubles have broken out in various parts of the Turkish dominions, and continued for successive years; such as the rebellion of Ali Pasha in Thessaly (1820); the revolt and independence of Greece (1824); the slaughter of the Janissaries at Constantinople (1826) and their order abolished; the annihilation of the Turkish and Egyptian fleets in the Bay of Navarino (1827) by the allied forces of English, French, and Russians; and the power of Turkey much broken in a war with Russia (1829). In the same year the French took Algiers, and established a colony; Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim (his son) threatened Constantinople (1833); great part of Syria revolted (1843); war in the Crimea, with troubles in Candia and Greece (1856)—all show that the empire of the Turks is tending to a state of exhaustion and depopulation by war and insurrection; add to these cholera, conflagrations, earthquakes, floods, and other causes, which go to prove that the hand of destiny is against them, and the prophecy is gradually being fulfilled—so truly described as "*the drying up of the great river Euphrates.*"

But in this progressive dissolution of Turkey,* a remarkable object is said to be had in view, as among the purposes of God's sovereignty over nations, and His constant regard for His chosen people, Israel—“*that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.*” Now, who are these “*kings of the East?*”† Is the term not applicable, in the fullest sense, to the *descendants of Abraham* (from “the East”), the *royal tribe of Judah* (with Benjamin), and the “*ten tribes*” (afterwards) *forming*

* Interpreters of prophecy for the last two centuries have agreed in referring this “*vial*” to the Turkish power, which has held “the Euphrates” for seven centuries. The “*drying up*” would not seem to portend a violent and sudden destruction; but rather a gradual sapping of strength and decay of energy—a sinking from exhaustion of the vital powers, and not from a sudden shock—and this appears exactly the case with that country. *Turkey*, it is said, *is fast failing for want of Turks*, through ease and apathy, and a spirit of *toleration* to all creeds, unknown in Islam; whereby many more embrace the faith of Christendom, many prejudices, through European intercourse are being removed; and, through a kind of *fatalism*, many believe that Divine judgments are against them, and *their end is near*. That end, probably, is that the Mohammedan remnant will merge in Christianity. Mohammed, and the effect and direction of his apostasy, are considered by writers (such as Dr. Keith) to be alluded to in Dan. viii. 11—14, where a “*little horn*” is seen springing up among the “*four horns*” of Alexander the Great's divided empire; and the continuance of the desolation, against God's sanctuary and people, is described as “*unto 2,300 years,*” reckoned from the invasion of Greece by Xerxes, A.D. 480—1 to A.D. 1820—21; when the first great *weakening* began against the Turks.

† From “*the East,*” or “*the sun-rising.*”

the kingdom of Israel? Was it not declared by Jehovah Himself that they should be *a nation of kings and priests unto God?*" "*a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people,*" "*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation?*"* The restoration of "*the Jews*" to their own Holy Land, in the last days, and their conversion and rule over the East under their revealed Messiah, as "**KING OVER ALL THE EARTH,**"† is a prominent announcement of unquestionable truth, pervading the whole range of prophecy. The *exhaustion* of the Turkish dominion, which extends still over Palestine, and the decline of Mohammedanism which still spreads far over Syria, India, China, &c.,‡ seem to be the circumstances under the "*sixth vial,*" which are surely, though

* See Exod. xix. 5, 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6.

† Zech. xiv. 9; and see also Ps. lxxii. (*passim*); Dan. vii. 14, 27; Isa. ii. 2—4, &c.; xxiv. 21, 23; xxxii. 1, 2, &c.; lxi. 1—6, &c. Jer. xxiii. 5—8; Ezek. xxxvii. 21—28; Hos. i. 10, 11, &c. &c.

‡ Great progress, we know, is being made, not only in Turkey, but in our own Indian possessions, in China, Japan, &c., in spreading the truth of Christianity, and breaking down the prejudices of Mohammedanism, Hindooism, Buddhism, and Judaism. Many Jews are turning to the faith of Christ; upwards of 130 are converted and ordained *clergymen of the Church of England*; and many more are flocking to their own land and to Jerusalem. There is a Protestant English Church with a bishopric, now established for some years, on Mount Zion; agricultural associations for Palestine have been formed in our country and in America; a considerable farm has been bought, and successfully cultivated, between Jaffa and Jerusalem, for the employment of converts and inquirers; the Palestine Exploration

in a manner imperceptibly, preparing the way—like the drying up of the waters of a mighty river, for the passing over of

“THE KINGS OF THE EAST!”

13, 14.—While the “*Sixth Vial*” is being poured out upon the river “Euphrates,” there is shown to the prophet the figure of “*three unclean spirits*,” resembling “*frogs*”—unclean animals of the fenny and marshy ground—proceeding “*out of the mouth of the dragon*,” “*of the beast*,” and “*of the false prophet*.” These are called “*the spirits of devils*” or demons, “*working miracles*,” doing signs, and going forth “*unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world*,” to gather them and their hosts together to a great battle, of the “*great day of God Almighty*.”

In this connecting stream of the “*Sixth Vial*,” we seem brought down to a state and circumstances almost in our very midst, and characterizing the “*perilous times*” of the “*last days*” spoken of by St. Paul.* During a kind of pause, or cessation from external judgments on the Turkish empire and their false religion, the “three unclean spirits” are fulfilling a work in preparation “for the great day of God Almighty,” and the downfall of Babylon.

Society, &c., together with the influence of the Prince of Wales’ late visit to the Holy Land, have all tended to direct special attention and excite a growing interest in behalf of the “Jews” and their restoration to Palestine.

* See 2 Tim. iii. 1—5; 1 Thess. ii. 3—12.

The “*unclean spirit out of the mouth of the dragon*”—that old serpent, and Satan, who inspired and deceived both pagan and Papal Rome*—may be explained as *the evil principles of absolutism* lording it *over nations*, which brought in the first deadly effects of the fearful era of the French Revolutionists;† (2), in that “*out of the mouth of the beast*,” or *temporal and spiritual* assumed sovereignty of Rome, we may see the evil principles of *Papal supremacy* and assumption, lording it *over Churches* and consciences, crushing men’s minds, and leading eventually to the opposite extreme of lawlessness, and insubordination to all ecclesiastical authority and established order, and to political radicalism, free-thinking rationalism, and foul atheism;‡ and (3), that “*out*

* Evil spirits, proceeding “*out of the mouth*,” is an expression which will take us back prophetically to (Dan. vii. 8), the “*mouth speaking great things*,” before referred to as the character of “*the little horn*” of the Papacy; and “*speaking great words against the Most High*” (ver. 25.) “*The mouth*,” from which the evil spirits proceed and the evil principles are diffused abroad, would imply that a chief active medium of the mischief is that of boastful speech, discourse, lecture, oratory, &c.

† The *Satanic* (“unclean”) principles, which were prevalent in the *French Revolution*, of atheism, infidelity, anarchy, and universal levelling, with *radicalism, rationalism, and republicanism of the fiercest and worst kind*, are no doubt comprehended under this figure of “*the three frogs*,” which seem peculiarly to attach the prophecy to *France* and the Gallic swamps of Popery. (See a curious heraldic device of “*three frogs*,” on an ancient *coat of arms* of the French kings, Elliott, vol. iv., p. 63.)

of the mouth of the false prophet," as the idolatry, superstition, and falsehood of the propagandist Romish creed and worship, engendering practical infidelity and demoralization, rejection of the sound doctrines of the Gospel,* deadening Ritualism, and soul-consuming Pharisaism.

15, 16.—The great event of the *coming of Christ* to the earth, from the Father's throne in the heavens, is shown to be near at hand, when the "*unclean spirits*," above-mentioned, have gone forth with their contagious venom, not only through the kingdoms of the (Roman) earth, but through "*the whole world*;"† preparing them for a *war of nations*,

* In "*the dragon*," we may distinguish the restless, the disturbing, the devouring element—in "*the beast*"—the aggressive, the defiling, the destructive—in "*the false prophet*"—the insinuating, the deceiving, the betraying. But the ramifications of Romanism, like the heads of the *fabulous Hydra*, are multifarious and intricate to calculate. The author has done his best to define and distinguish between the terms "*dragon*," "*beast*," and "*false prophet*," and the evil principles described as severally coming out of the mouth of each, and most busy in these last days. Others have interpreted them as the spirit of "*infidelity, Popery, and antichristian priestcraft*." But the evils are so interlaced, and the great Evil Principle, from which they emanate, so Protean, that it is most difficult to draw a very accurate line between the one and the other. They are, doubtless, in their baneful influence upon society, and in their assaults upon Christendom, a serpent-brood of multiplied, complicated, and indefinable mischief. Three words may suggest much of the whole system—*Jacobinism, Propagandism, and Jesuitism*.

† The "*whole world*"—In this new expression we are led

called ARMAGEDDON,* on a scale of magnitude, and with disastrous consequences, such as history has never yet recorded. “*Blessed*,” indeed, may he be pronounced, who, amid the contending elements of evil now abroad through all society, “*keepeth his garments*” (baptismal and spiritual) undefiled, and parteth not with the all-precious robe of the *imputed righteousness* of his Redeemer, lest, if he trust in any other, he be found “*naked*” in the great day of reckoning, and put to “*shame*.”†

17.—With the solemn announcement by the Lord Himself of the nearness of “*the day of His next Advent*,” and the startling suddenness of that appearing—“*like a thief in the night*”—the “*seventh angel*,” having the last of the vials, pours it out “*into the air*,”‡ and, “*immediately*,” as under the “*seventh trumpet’s*” blast, there issued out of

beyond the bounds of the old Roman empire, to show how the greatest of all the earthquakes will “*shake all nations*,” before the “*Desire of all nations shall come*.” (Hag. ii. 6, 7; Zech. xiv. 1—3.) Some effects, we know, of this last have already been shown in the Indian mutiny (A.D. 1857), and the late destructive American Civil War, uprisings in the West Indies, &c.

* “*Armageddon*” (Heb.)—City, or Mount of Megiddo, near which great and decisive battles in former times were fought. (Judges v. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.) † See Rev. iii. 17, 18.

‡ The “*air*” may represent the very element, principle, or spirit, by which society exists, and through the vitality and healthiness of which, nations and Churches are maintained and held together.

“*the temple of heaven, from the throne,*” a “*great voice,*” with attendant “*thunderings,*” &c.—proclaiming, as it were to the Church, by the dread voice and supreme irresistible authority of Jehovah Himself, that, “IT IS DONE!”* The end is come! The mystery of the dispensation is accomplished! The final blast of the woe-trumpet is sounded! The “GREAT BABYLON” of the nations is “*come in remembrance before God!*” Her cup of iniquity is full! and the vial of God’s wrath must be out-poured in its “*fierceness!*”

18—20.—The greatest of all convulsions and revolutions, political and ecclesiastical, begins to take place now, with which others that have preceded, can bear no comparison. The whole framework and constitution of human society begin to undergo an extraordinary change, as though each island and mountain, maritime part and mainland, were moved out of its place,† and the “*great city,*” or Roman commonwealth of Christendom, was divided into “*three parts,*” and the established cities and Churches of the nations were shaken and falling to pieces.‡

* See Rev. x. 6, 7; xi. 15—19; xviii. 2; xix. 20, 21; xxi. 6.

† See a similar figure used under the “*sixth seal,*” ch. vi. 14. It was said at the great Revolution of 1848, that society was being resolved, as it were, into its original elements.

‡ The division “into three parts,” seems not yet defined; but symptoms are not wanting to show a probable tripartition (out of *Pan-Roman*) into *Pan-French*, *Pan-German*, and *Pan-Italian*.

21.—In the last approaching shocks of this mightiest of all "*earthquakes*"* known in the world for the complete uprooting of the Papacy, it is further described, that a "*great storm of hail out of heaven,*" accompanied it, the stones of which were of immense weight,† and that upon this, "*men*" still "*blasphemed God,*" because "*the plague was exceeding great.*"

We may, even now, hear "*the voices, and thunders, and lightnings,*" all the atmospheric phenomena preceding the full burst of the mighty

"*The great city*"—before mentioned, Rev. xiv. 8, and afterwards ch. xvii. 10, is described in one place, as "*Great Babylon,*" and in the other as "*reigning over the kings of the earth*"—imperial (Papal) Rome. We cannot define it to be exclusively the city of Rome itself, but also its territorial domination and spiritual usurpation in the Roman world.

* This "*great earthquake,*" or convulsion of nations, preparatory to and prognostic of the final "*fall of great Babylon,*" may have begun its shocks, (1), A.D. 1793, in the great French Revolution; (2), in 1830, the fall of the Bourbons; in 1848, fall of Louis Philippe and several other Papal sovereigns, and rise of Bonaparte's nephew, the present Emperor of the French; (4), siege and capture of Rome under Garibaldi, and flight of the Pope and cardinals, 1860—61; (5), Italy, under Victor Emmanuel, freed from the Poppedom, 1862; Austria humbled by Prussia, 1866, throwing off the Concordat, October, 1868; Spain free the same year, and—WHAT NEXT?

† Whatever literal meaning may attach to the "*great hail,*" within the compass of this last visitation of heaven, it is very evident that the leading idea is something highly *figurative*. It would seem to imply a terrible conflict from the North (the region of "*hail*") as under the first blowing of the trumpet

storm, in the unsettled condition of Continental Europe—in the large standing armies, ready, at a moment's notice, to rush forth to the terrible slaughter; in the uneasiness of Popery, already overthrown in her strongest holds of Austria and Spain, and in her most daring attempt—like the last convulsive efforts of the scotched, but not killed, "serpent"—to bring back *Protestant England*, with *priest-ridden Ireland*, and the whole British power and dominion, under her detestable sway! It can never be accomplished! The decree of infallible prophecy is written, as with the sunbeam of heaven, and declared as by "the great voice out of the temple and from the throne," against it—

"GREAT BABYLON IS COME IN REMEMBRANCE BEFORE GOD, TO GIVE UNTO HER THE CUP OF THE WINE OF THE FIERCENESS OF HIS WRATH!"

"He speaks, and It is done!"

(Rev. xi. 19), and the meeting of armies in battle, now using, for terrible havoc, cannon which throw balls of surprising dimensions. Witness the formidable rifled guns and cannon, strongly-armed turret ships, &c., of recent invention, casting shots like "hail," and of *calibre* more than sufficient for metal of a "talent," or hundred-weight. Many commentators explain this (figurative) "*great hail*," as betokening a great future descent of Northern armies upon some place in the East; perhaps on Palestine, after the return of the Jews; as the term "*Armageddon*" (in *Hebrew*) would imply, and remind us of the great

May our beloved country be still blessed of God in holding up the candle of the Reformation in the midst of much surrounding Popish darkness, and so be saved from the worst effects of the impending "earthquake" among the Continental nations. If once she yield her high and holy ground, as "God's city set upon a hill," and sacrifice her sacred witnessing character for Christ and His pure word, at the shrine of expediency, to political empirics and traitors to heaven, under the crafty policy, encroaching despotism, and corrupt creed of Rome—woe be to her glory! The crown will have fallen from her head, her banner laid in the dust, and "*Ichabod*" written upon her noble time-revered constitution in Church and State!* With all our sacred religious privileges and liberties, so long secured and blessed to

slaughter at "Megiddo," and near the valley of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings xxiii. 29; Joel iii. 12, and Zech. xii. 11), in which "Rosh, Meshec, and Tubal," are to take a leading part; and confederate powers, called "Gomer," "Togarmah, and his bands," "Gog and Magog," forces from the Volga to the Don, and from the Black Sea to Siberia, accompany him. (See Ezek. xxxix. Dan. x. xi. xii.)

* 1 Sam. iv. 21. "Through almost 300 years, through all varieties of public circumstances, all changes of men, all shades of general polity, we see one thing alone unchanged—the regular connexion of national misfortune with the introduction of Popish influence, and of national triumph with its exclusion." (The late Dr. Croly.) "*It has been impossible*," he observes, "*to conceive that this regular interchange of punishment and preservation has been without a cause, and without a purpose.*"

our national prosperity, we shall assuredly suffer the more, if we yield to our old enemy and surrender the fortress which has been set up amongst us, as *a watch-tower of Light and Protection to the whole of down-trodden Europe.*

He who knew his Lord's will and did it not, was to be "beaten with many stripes." The greater the light which any Church or people have, the greater the "condemnation," if they love and go back to the "darkness." But, let us *hope better things, and things which accompany salvation.* Let us each endeavour to act up to our plain course and line of duty marked out in God's word; and be stimulated onward to determination, and to victory, by the "sure word of prophecy" on our side, the *fated, certain, and fast-approaching ruin of*

"GREAT BABYLON!"

"O Lord of hosts, Almighty King!
Behold the sacrifice we bring;
To every arm Thy strength impart,
Thy Spirit shed through every heart!

Wake in our hearts the living fires,
The holy faith that warm'd our sires;
Thy hand hath made our NATION free!—
To "fight" for her is serving Thee!*

* It is, of course, the *good fight of faith* which we have to

“Be Thou the “pillar’d flame” to show
The midnight snare, the silent foe :
And when the “BATTLE” thunders loud,
Still guide us ’mid the moving cloud.

Stretch forth Thine arm, defend our cause !
Maintain intact our Country’s laws !
That all Thy Church may surely see,
How “strong” are they who trust in THEE !”

maintain, using every lawful means which Providence puts into our hands to preserve our rights. We must ever remark, that *“the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,”* &c. (2 Cor. x. 4.)

REV. XVII. 1—18.

EXPLANATION TO JOHN OF THE JUDGMENT
COMING.—THE SCARLET-CLOTHED WOMAN.—
“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT.”—THE TEN
HORNS.—THE WATERS.—THE BURNING.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither: I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2.—With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3.—So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4.—And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5.—And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,

THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6.—And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: And when I saw her I wondered with great admiration. 7.—And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. 8.—The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9.—And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10.—And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11.—And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 12.—And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,

which have received no kingdom as yet ; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13.—These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14.—These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings : and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful. 15.—And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16.—And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17.—For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18.—And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

1, 2.—One of the *Seven vial-angels* is seen in this chapter as if coming and explaining to John many things concerning the “judgment” on the (base) “woman,” Apocalyptic Babylon—just

previously foretold as being determined upon in the purposes of heaven, and near at hand—which might interest the Church of God at large, and throw further light on the nature, locality, and extent of this deadly gangrene in the professing Christian community.

3—5.—The corrupt and idolatrous Church, in contrast with the true Church before remarked as the chaste Spouse of Christ,* is now described in the character of a depraved Woman, having unlawful association “with the kings of the earth,” through whom the people and “inhabitants” have been led to drink deeply of her defilements. It is explained of this unchaste one,† (1) that she presides over “*many waters*,” these being

* See Rev. xii. 1. This contrast is pointed out, in a spiritual sense, by St. Paul:—“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ; but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.)

† Idolatry of the creature and covetousness—drawing the heart’s affections away from the true and living God—is the sin of Rome which causes the character given in this chapter of the base, vile, and unfaithful woman, to be stamped upon her:—“*πορν*” is the word used for a corrupt Church, by St. John, and the same, or its derivatives, is employed in the Greek Septuagint of the Old Testament, at least *fifty times*, to describe the spiritual fornication, that is, the corrupt doctrine and idolatrous practices of the Churches of Israel and Judah. (Dr. Wordsworth.)

afterwards shown (verse 15) to mean “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;” (2) that she is to be seen in a kind of “*wilderness*,”* and seated on a “*scarlet-coloured beast*,” before pointed out (Rev. xiii) as “*full of names of blasphemy*,” and having “*seven heads and ten horns*;” (3) that she is “*arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls*,” with a “*golden cup*” of her abominations in her hand;†



(4) she has a legible name and title upon her forehead, in writing,—

* “*A wilderness*”—different from the wilderness-state, or retirement on earth of the true Church. Some think the “wilderness” here, in which St. John has this vision of the base Church, points to the locality and neighbourhood of the *Campagna di Roma*, or *Plains of Rome*, once fertile and peopled, but now marshy, unhealthy, and desolate. (See Bell’s “*Geography*.”)

† See Rev. xiv. 8. The “*golden cup*,” (Jer. li. 6) of which

“MYSTERY,* BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE
EARTH!”—

(5) To complete the picture, she is beheld as one drunken, intoxicated with blood, even “*the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.*”

6.—One may well stand aghast, like St. John, at this fearful character and description of the “strange and odious woman,” represented here under the guise of a professing Church of Christ! The names of “*blasphemy*,” inscribed on “the beast” that bears her, prove that it is no pagan or heathen form of corruption which is thus depicted by the Spirit of God for our instruction; but it is one who, having known the true Jehovah, has “*forsaken the guide of her youth, and forgotten the covenant of her God,*” and “*dealt treacherously with Him.*”†

all nations are said to drink, may signify the “*strong delusion*,” like a potent spell from a poisonous mixture, with which Popery, like Babylon of old, beguiled and “made the nations mad.”

See Figure of Rome represented on a medal, of the recent date of A.D. 1825, as a woman with a cup, and the boastful inscription, “*Sedet super universam*”—“*She presides over the universe.*”

* See 2 Thess. ii. 7. The Greek word, “*Μυστήριον*,” used to be inscribed on the Pope’s mitre, till they were ashamed of the exposure at the Reformation, and Pope Julius III. had it removed.

† Prov. ii. 17, and Mal. ii. 14, 15.

She rides upon the “*scarlet-coloured beast*,” as being supported and upheld, through her usurpations and beguilements, by the civil governments of the old Gothic ten kingdoms; she is arrayed in “scarlet” robes, herself, as the favourite coloured garb of women of her character, and the ordinary colour of the dress of her Pope, cardinals, and high officers;* and she is decked out with jewels and pearls, as a meretricious attraction to her shrines and ordinances, where the show of her splendour, the pomp of ceremonial, and her heaped-up offerings,† all tell of her love of this world, her lack of spirituality, and the blind delusion and adoration of her votaries, “*led captive at her will*.”

The charge against her for draining, by copious draughts, “*the blood of the saints and of the martyrs* (or witnesses) *of Jesus*,” is proved over and over again; it is indelibly written on the dark pages of history and needs little further

* “*Scarlet*,” is still the distinguishing colour at Rome of cardinal’s hats, cloaks, stockings, trappings of horses and mules, carriages, &c., on all public ceremonies, and state occasions.

† It is notorious how the shrines of the Roman Catholic “saints” (?) are enriched with votive offerings of jewellery and treasures of every description, till the riches in some instances are immense. Bp. Newton notices the case of the Chapel of Loretto. The Shrine of Thomas, of Canterbury, was visited by fanatical pilgrims from all quarters, in the dark days of England, and incalculable spoils were accumulated from the blind adulation of the deluded worshippers.

comment.* As “*great Babylon*,” of old, the head of the *ancient idolatry* of the heathen world, was remarkable for her cruel treatment of God’s people Israel, imperious, oppressive, destructive, invading, devastating, and leading captive; so, modern Rome—the “*Babylon*” of Christendom—imperial, pagan, and Papal, the head of the fourth universal empire, and of Christianized idolatry, has ever proved herself the cruel enemy of God’s saints and Christ’s faithful witnesses; breaking

* See under the “sixth seal,” Rev. vi., xiii., &c. The more modern persecutions and massacres of Protestants, since the Reformation, may be enumerated (though referred to before) under the following heads:—A.D. 1535 (Jan. 21) thirty-six persons burnt alive in Paris, in the presence of the King (Francis I.), the Queen, Princes, Parliament, Judges, &c.:—1545-6, many Protestants, women and children, perished by being burnt to death in a barn:—1547-9, in the reign of Henry II., and Francis II., great numbers suffered death, especially at “Amboise:”—1560-8, under Charles IX. and his mother Catherine de Medicis, Duke of Alva, and Cardinal de Lorraine, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew took place, and persecution of the Huguenots, to the delight of Rome and Pope Gregory XIII.:—1685, under Louis XIV., treacherous Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and flight of about 800,000 Protestants from France:—1553-8, in Queen Mary’s reign (of “bloody memory”), in England 277 persons suffered; including 5 bishops, 21 clergymen, 8 lay-gentlemen, 84 tradesmen, 100 husbandmen, servants and labourers, 55 women, and 4 children! Without proceeding any farther, we may add, in the words of our historian (Hume): “*Human nature appears not, on any occasion, so detestable, and at the same time so absurd, as in these religious persecutions, which sink men below the infernal spirits in wickedness and below the beasts in folly.*”

down their sanctuaries, imprisoning, and slaying with sword and with flame; persecuting with excruciating torture and wholesale massacre, whenever she was able, *with pitiless greed of “blood.”*

7.—John, in the person of the true Church, is restrained from continuing in wonder at the appearance, or doubt as to the identity, of this “strange woman,” professedly the Church of Christ, with her name “*mystery*,”* or as to the meaning of the “*beast that carrieth her*”—by “the Angel” proceeding at once to the explanation.

8.—The idolatrous and tyrannical power of Imperial Rome which “*was*” in existence in St. John’s days, and through which he was banished to Patmos, passes away, and “*is not*,” while the empire is in the hands of Christian rulers, from the conversion of Constantine; but, still,—and this forms the strangeness and the mystery—“*it is*”† idolatrous and tyrannical again towards “*the saints of the Most High*,” in the usurpation by the Papacy; and kings and emperors bow at her feet, supporting her pretensions—“*full of names of blasphemy*”‡—strong to work mischief,

* The “*mystery*” of Popery may be said to consist in her *inexplicable superstitions*, and in her *inexplicable beguiling charms* to the last, exercised upon the human intellect, soul, and conscience, from the highest to the lowest.

† See Rev. xi. 7, xi. 16, xiii. 1, 3; and Dan. vii. 8.

‡ The progressive character of Romanism, in its secular, ecclesiastical, and spiritual tyranny over the minds and consciences of mankind, and its robbing Christ of His proper

as a beast of the earth, and speaking great things against the Most High God.

9, 10.—The “*mind that hath wisdom*” given “*from above*,” and which is well instructed in the word of God, unprejudiced, and trained in patient investigation of “the truth,” may learn more as the time and the subject advance. “*The seven heads*” of the beast (before-mentioned), are explained as “*seven mountains on which the woman sitteth*,”—the seven-hilled city of Rome, about which there can be no mistake.* But to make the point of application still more close, they are shown to symbolize also “*seven kings*,” or forms of supreme rule and government† which have been observed successively in this great power, from its pagan to its Papal domination. “*Five had fallen*”‡ at

honours, may be observed in the addition here—“*full of names of blasphemy*” (verse 3). In an earlier stage it is with “*the name of blasphemy upon his (uncrowned) heads*.” (Rev. xii. 1.)

* It is a well-known term, even in old Latin authors applied to Rome on account of its seven hills—“*Urbs septem-collis*.” “Historians, geographers, poets, all speak of “the city with seven hills;” and passages might be quoted to this purpose without number and without end.” (Bp. Newton.)

† These “*seven*” succeeding forms of government have been before explained in notes under Rev. xiii.

‡ The “*five*,” which *had fallen*, are described as (1) *Kings*, beginning under Romulus, (2) *Consuls*, (3) *Dictators*, (4) *Decemvirs*, (5) *Military or Consular Tribunes*. Livy and Tacitus both mention *these five* forms as succeeding one another in order. The “*ten kingdoms*” have continued much the same in number, under the different vicissitudes of war and revolution, *up to a*

the time when John wrote (A.D. 96); and “*the sixth*,” or imperial pagan dominion, passed away by the conversion to Christianity of Constantine the Great; and the other, or “*seventh head*” had “*not yet come*” in John’s days; and, when come, was to “*continue a short space*,”—meaning, most likely, the Roman Catholic imperial Dynasty in the hands of Bonaparte, whose son was made “*King of Rome*,” and which had but a brief space of existence—for about fifteen years—the young king dying soon after his elevation to the throne, and Napoleon, “the child of the great Revolution,” having his short-lived career of conquest cut off and brought to a close, A.D. 1815.

11.—The “*seventh head*” having thus disappeared from the scene, it is further shown that an “*eighth head*” should arise after him, having some relation and resemblance to him, and as it were a revival or integral portion “of the (former) seven.” If the present restored *Empire of France*, whose head is the nephew of the late Napoleon, who bears his name, and who holds Rome (Papal) under command by his troops to the present day,

recent date. Mr. Cuninghame, writing in 1817, mentions them as follows:—“(1) *Austria*, (2) *Bavaria*, (3) *England* (which virtually fell away from allegiance at the Reformation), (4) *France*, (5) *Naples*, (6) *Netherlands*, (7) *Portugal*, (8) *Sardinia*, (9) *Spain*, (10) *Wirttemberg*. But what changes have taken place in these within the last twenty years!”

be the “*eighth head and of the seventh*,” here spoken of, then we need only wait the result of time and events; when this power shall be fully developed in connection with “Babylon” and the “anti-christ” of Rome, and both fall together as predicted, and “*shall go into perdition.*”

12, 13.—The “*ten horns*” are the (Gothic) “*kingdoms*” of Europe which had received no regal power when John lived; but at “*one hour*,”* or about the same time that Papal Rome begins to exert her imperial and spiritual sway over the nations, these “*ten kingdoms*” also rise, and are of “*one mind*” with her. They submit to her religion; they yield to her tyrannical “*power*,” they act with her in oppression; and add “*strength*” to her influence, both secular and ecclesiastical, over the whole of Christendom.

14.—The “*ten kingdoms*” of the continental and confederated Papacy, have, up to a recent date, assisted Rome in her hostile designs upon the followers of “*the Lamb*.” They have countenanced and encouraged her persecutions of God’s saints. The “*witnesses*” were figuratively slain by their help, and the faithful Spouse of Christ was made to flee from the face of the “*dragon*,” for a certain period, into the “*wilderness*.”

But, that time having passed, “*the Lamb*” with

* “*μικρον ωραν*”—“*one hour*,” or, during one and the same precise period of time.

His chosen are destined henceforth to “*overcome*” the earthly and Papal powers arrayed against them; which took place first at the figurative resurrection of “witnesses,” and their ascension to power, influence, and security at the *glorious Reformation*;* and which will be still more triumphant, complete, and universal at the impending fall of the “*great city*,” and the personal advent and reign of Christ, with all His saints. This great victory, it is expressly added, is to be gained *by Christ himself*; as if He should appear in person to vindicate His usurped honours and dominion, to make manifest His chosen, and exalt His oppressed Church in the earth:—

“For He is Lord of lords!

And King of kings!

And they who are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

15.—John’s angelic instructor proceeds to acquaint him further, that “*the many waters*,” on which the “*strange woman sitteth*” (verse 1), really represent the great extent of her unrighteous sway, temporal and spiritual, over “*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*,”—as is seen fulfilled during the more flourishing times of her usurpation, and not long before her predicted *overthrow*.

16.—About this latter period, “*the ten horns*,” before noticed as the *ten kingdoms* of the Roman

* See and compare Rev. xi. 11—13, xii. 10, 11, and xiii. 7.

earth, *once acknowledging and supporting her power*, shall begin to feel the weight of the weary yoke on their necks, shall hate and make her desolate ; and shall strip her of her possessions and devour her fleshly strength,* and to complete the soreness of the catastrophe and her *ruin*, shall assist in burning her with “the fire” of God’s anger, as ready instruments of his righteous and deserved indignation.

17—For, it is affirmed that God had put it into their hearts, and for this end partly had raised them up—as He had done before with the Egyptian and the Assyrian, “to show in them His power”—that they, too, might “*fulfil His will*,” and “*agree*” for a time to give their kingly authority and power unto “the beast,” until “the words” and purposes of God concerning “the woman’s” downfall *should be fulfilled*.

18.—Here the heavenly messenger closes his words of inspired exposition to John and the Church of God, so as to make it beyond all doubt or chance of mistake respecting “*the woman*,”

* How remarkably was this begun to be carried into effect by the late Napoleon, and throughout the Revolutionary period of the French war; and still more recently in the attacks on Rome by Garibaldi; the enthronement of *Victor Emmanuel*, as King of Italy, and supported by the present Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French; by Austria throwing off the “Concordat;” and Spain, *the most Catholic*, last of all, renouncing blind vassalage to the Popedom, and asserting *religious liberty*!

the “*great city*,” or “*Babylon*,” so much spoken of, and the great theme of this part of the Apocalypse; by adding, “THE WOMAN IS THAT GREAT CITY WHICH REIGNETH OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.” And what other capital city in the world could John see, or think of, in his days, answering to this description of the Fourth Universal Empire—first *Pagan* then *Papal*—but ROME?

Let us receive the accuracy of this Divine interpretation, as not that merely of *man*, but as it is, indeed and in truth, *the message of God*.* From this, we can scarcely help having our eyes opened, if they never have been opened before, to the reality and *fact of Papal Rome being the Apocalyptic Babylon*.† And, if so, how ought we

* See St. Paul’s solemn declaration to the same effect (Gal. i. 12.)—“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

† Dr. Wordsworth (the present Bp. of Lincoln) after closely examining, as a scholar and a calm Christian enquirer, the whole bearing of this question, states the conclusion to which he has arrived in these striking terms of logical and earnest conviction:—“*After a careful meditation, for many years, upon these prophecies concerning the Apocalyptic Babylon, the present writer here solemnly, in the presence of the Omniscient Searcher of hearts, Who dictated these awful predictions, records this as his deliberate judgment upon them, probably for the last time.*”—“Since it is generally agreed that these prophecies concern *Rome*, and since they were *not* fulfilled in *heathen Rome*; since they concern *Rome* as she was to become after she had ceased to be *heathen*; and since, after she had ceased to be *heathen*, she became in course of time subject to the Bishop of *Rome*,

to guard against the beguilement of her sorceries, the least mark of an attachment to her falsities, of outward conformity to her Ritualism, or of yielding for a moment to her influence! Yet, alas! how many even among our rulers and in our Protestant land, ministers in our churches, and people in our congregations, are doing this very thing; with the "*Book of God*" against it, plainly open before their eyes, with the stigma of God's *fiercest anger*, by the voice of an angel, stamped upon her votaries, and the infallible sentence of His judgment, pledged and pronounced, for the certain perdition of all who are belonging to her, found within her, or, like Lot's wife, wistfully looking after her!

O, let us keep our garments unspotted from this Romish contagion still abroad, and make no manner of approach to the doomed "city," to compromise our Protestant principles, or parley, for a moment, with so dangerous an enemy! The children of God must see that they have "holiness to the Lord" inscribed as on their foreheads—their true title and memorial before God, to be "*known and read of all men*,"—so contrary and opposed to that on the forehead of the "harlot"

and has continued to be subject to him for many hundred years; therefore, our conclusion is, that they concern Rome as the capital city of the Bishop of Rome, and of the Papal world." (See "Notes," Rev. xvii, p. 251.)

of Rome, and the *mark* on all connected with her idolatrous creed.

May we be seen among “*the called, and chosen, and faithful,*” true subjects of “*the King of kings and Lord of lords,*” and thus have good cause to lift up our heads, now that our “*Redemption draweth nigh.*” The approaching “*great deliverance*” should surely be a source of joy and gratitude, of hope and thanksgiving, among God’s long-oppressed Church and people. Even all Christendom, yes, the whole world, Jew and Gentile, are deeply interested in getting rid of this grievous incubus; which has, more or less, *for twelve centuries*, pressed down men’s souls to the earth, hindered the progress of Christ’s saving truth, and tyrannized, mysteriously and marvellously, over “*peoples, and multitudes, and tongues !*”

“STAR of morn and even,
Sun of heaven’s heaven !
Saviour high and dear,
Toward us turn Thine ear !
Through whate’er may come,
Thou canst lead us home !

Though the gloom be grievous,
Those we leant on leave us ;
Though the coward heart
Quit its proper part—
Though the tempter come,
Thou wilt lead us home !

“SAVIOUR! pure and holy,
Lover of the lowly,
Sign us with THY sign,
Take our hands in THINE;
Take our hands and come,
Lead THY children home!

STAR of morn and even,
Shine on us from Heaven!
From THY GLORY-THRONE,
Hear THY very own!
LORD AND SAVIOUR COME,
Lead us to our home!”

REV. XVIII. 1—8.

THE ANGEL WITH GREAT POWER DECLARES THE
FALL OF BABYLON.—EXHORTATION “TO COME
OUT OF HER.”—HER PLAGUES IN ONE DAY, BY
BURNING.

AND after these things I saw another
angel come down from heaven,
having great power; and the earth was
lightened with his glory. 2.—And he
cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,
Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and
is become the habitation of devils, and

the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3.—For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4.—And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5.—For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6.—Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7.—How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8.—Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

1.—When the great light of the *Reformation* of the Church beamed from heaven, “the Angel of the covenant” was seen, typically, coming down, clothed with a cloud, His face shining as the sun, and having a “rainbow round His head.”* And now, when new and glorious light is about to descend upon the Church of Christ in the midst of the world, a similar sign of the “*bright angel*” is seen by John, coming down “*with great power*,” and shedding rays of glory in His course as He enlightens the earth.

2.—He comes, with a clear and loud-repeated voice, in the Church,† confirming the fact before signified,‡ of the imminent and all-but accomplished “fall” of great Babylon, Papal Rome, saying—

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!
And is become the habitation of devils,
And the hold of every foul spirit,
And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird ;”—

* Rev. x. 1.

† The “*crying mightily as with a strong voice*,” is thought by many to refer to the greater diffusion—in recent and present times—of prophetic knowledge respecting “Babylon’s” approaching doom; clearer perception and proclamation, in preaching and writing, of the coming great event; “Elijah-”like appeals to rouse the decided Protestant spirit of our “martyr-”ancestors in “turning the hearts of the fathers to (or *with*) the children, and the children to the fathers,” and so preserve the earth’s inhabitants from being smitten, promiscuously, with a curse, at the second advent, or in the visitation on Babylon. See Mal. iv. 6.

‡ See Rev. xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xvii. 16.

reiterating, also, as another sign of her coming fall and punishment, her lost and deplorable condition—the great and grievous polluting influences, which she politically and spiritually exercises among the “*nations*” and the “*merchants*” of the earth.

3.—The word “*merchants*”—here newly added to “*nations*” and “*kings of the earth*,” before mentioned (ch. xvii. 2, 15)—would almost bring home the Romish infection, in its last stage, to our own British (commercial) shores! the nation of “*merchants*” and shopkeepers, as we have been termed by foreigners; whose ships cover all seas, and whose trade is more extended than any other, over all regions of the globe.

And what country in the world is suffering more than ours, at the present moment, from Popish aggressions—base and diabolical assaults of Jesuits, Ultramontanists, and others, upon the Protestant purity, liberty, and solidity of our *United Church of Great Britain and Ireland*? Let us be awakened to the danger which must arise if one outpost should be taken, and defend it with all energy of body, soul, and spirit, against the invading swarms of “unclean and hateful birds,” foul spirits let loose as if by Satan himself against us.*

* POPERY has ever been able to draw to her side, when she has wanted helps from the “world,” all species of “*foul and unclean spirits*,” as though by the principle of *homogeneous attraction*—“*like loves like*”—elements of mischief from among

4, 5.—Another warning "*voice*," in succession upon the former alarming notification to the Church of Christ, is heard—to rouse the slumbering, awaken the careless, and bring any doubting "*people of God*" out of the doomed city, who may be still lingering within her borders, or hesitating about the truth of her announced doom, or dallying with her deceitful charms, or delaying to "*escape for their lives*"—as if it were said, in the words of the *Angel of God*—

"Come out of her, my people! *—
That ye be not partakers of her sins,
And that ye receive not of her plagues!
For her sins have reached unto heaven,
And God hath remembered her iniquities!"

all, and even opposite quarters and classes. Her standard of hostility to the good and pure has been joined at once by the lowest republican, the loftiest despot, and the fiercest revolutionist, by the infidel and the atheist, by the immoral and licentious, by the fanatic, the traitor, and the assassin!—"unclean birds," from every corner, have flocked to her "*hold*," as congenial helps, and have combined, and still are combining with her, against every thing opposed to her religious creed, or rivalling her political influence, or withstanding her ambitious SUPREMACY! "*The end*," she boldly affirms, "*sanctifies the means*!" and, "*Let us do evil, that good may come*!" But what says St. Paul, in addition?—"Whose damnation is just!" (Rom. iii. 8.)

* There have been some of "God's people," in past times, who, though they never came out from Rome professedly, yet proved themselves men of God, in spite of their Church's corrupt teaching and principles. Such, perhaps, were Pascal, Fenelon, Martin Boos, &c.; and several others, we may charitably hope, of this character—Protestants at heart—exist at the present day.

6.—The sacred voice of urgent exhortation and warning ceases not, but redoubles in intenseness as the dangers thicken, the clouds blacken, and the sulphurous tempest of “fire” such as once overwhelmed iniquitous Sodom,* threatens to descend and alight on guilty Rome. It is now addressed, as if to the *executioners of God’s justice*, among His servants and people, saying—

“Reward her even as she rewarded you !

And double unto her double according to her works,
In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double !”

7.—“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously,
So much sorrow and torment give her !

For she saith in her heart, I sit a QUEEN, and am no WIDOW,
And shall see no sorrow !”

We may learn from this that ample retribution, though long restrained through the forbearance of God, will soon and fully be repaid her. As she assisted in destroying the bodies, and consigned the souls of many to “eternal torments ;” so seems the “double” destruction awaiting her, and accorded by the law of retaliation in *her body politic and ecclesiastic*, in her spiritual and temporal despotism, in her very city and system being brought to desolation.”† She has luxuriated in pride and loftiness, in licentiousness and wantonness. She has been “given to pleasures,” and “dwelt carelessly,” *trusting in her wickedness.*‡

* See Gen. xix. 12—28 ; Luke xvii. 28—32.

† See Ps. cxxxvii. 8 ; Jer. l. 14, 15 ; Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

‡ Isa. xlvii. 7—11.

Like her prototypes, Assyrian Nineveh and Babylon, she has seemed—

"The rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly,
That said in her heart, 'I am, and there is none beside me!'—
How is she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down in!"*

She drank deep of the wine of delicacies, and, through her "blasphemies," has used, as it were, the golden sacred vessels of the house of the Lord for her idolatrous revelries, like the infatuated King Belshazzar.†

8.—Therefore, "she shall be recompensed according to her work;" "according to what she hath done, so shall it be done unto her."‡ Like the judgment and sudden destruction which overtook ancient Babylon in the midst of drinking and festivity; so will "her plagues" come, as from the hand of the Lord, "*in one day*," or even "*in one hour*"—suddenly and sharply! as the "mourning," "famine" and "death," consequent upon a state of close siege and shutting up into the hands of blockading forces of the enemy; so shall it be with unthinking and arrogant Rome. Her visitation of sorrow and travail shall fall upon her from an unexpected hand, and in an unlooked-for "hour." Her end shall be that the enemy will "burn her with fire,"§ according

* Zeph. ii. 15. † See Dan. v. 1—4. ‡ Jer. l. 29, &c.

§ The repeated reference to the destruction of the mystical

to the judgment appointed and foretold of the Lord, for—

“STRONG IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGETH HER!”*

The very nature of the ground beneath the city of Rome seems to contain a fiery engine of destruction, as the “Tophet” ordained of old,† and prepared for the infliction of tremendous punishment by the strong arm of the OMNIPOTENT JEHOVAH! It is saturated with beds of sulphur, and the *substrata* of destruction; it seems as certainly prepared for the flames as the wood and coal on the hearth are prepared for the “taper which shall kindle the fire to consume them.”‡ He who has all creation at His command, can never lack instruments—above, around, beneath—living and rational, material and elemental, to accomplish the purposes and decrees of His holy word and the sovereignty of His just will. As He has said

Babylon “*by fire*,” has led many to think, not without some reason, that this element will be employed as the final instrument in the hand of God for her complete overthrow and reduction to ashes. It was that element, we know, which was signally used against Sodom and the cities of the plain. The same was employed for the punishment and ruin of literal Babylon. And, as a marked analogy runs through God’s judgments against the same species of sins—idolatry, licentiousness, and oppression, in different ages and places; so, we may conceive, that the Almighty may take this terrible weapon of His indignation again, as aforetime, and “*kindle it against Babylon*.” * See Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xvi. 17—21, and xvii. 16.

† Isa. xxx. 33. ‡ See Townsend’s “Tour in Italy,” 1850.

it, so He can do it; as He has spoken, so He can make it stand good. The very “*smoke*” from “*the fire*” of His anger against sin, can be summoned into His service; and so ascend up to heaven as to be a memorial of His justice to the latest generations—a perpetual warning, and an “*abhorring unto all flesh.*”*

O, should not the voice which calls the sleepers in Sodom to awake, and the revellers in Babylon to “*come out,*” be listened to, without delay? An angel’s voice may now be heard, near the doomed city, entreating all who would not be “*partakers of her sins, nor receive of her plagues,*” to come forth at once, and without a moment’s hesitation, *and escape for their lives, and look not behind them!* Should the false glare and luxury of Rome’s worship, or the speciousness of her queen-like beauty and unity be allowed any longer to ensnare and mislead “*the people of God*”?

We would entreat any one who values his soul’s peace and safety, and regards the voice of merciful admonition, to *take heed in time!* We would say, “*Escape to the mountains,*” lest ye be consumed in the general ruin! The “*Zoar*” of peace and God’s “*hill of Zion,*” in the holy fellowship of the Protestant community, are still open to you! The sure refuge of the sinner is in the bosom of Christ’s love! Hither you may always

* Isa. lxvi. 24.

flee, and here you may find that REST for the soul which cannot be found elsewhere, in the turmoil of the world, in the slavery of sin, or within the precincts of *a corrupt and falling Church*.

“Thou JUDGE of quick and dead !

Before whose bar severe,

With holy joy or guilty dread

We all shall soon appear ;

Our cautioned souls prepare,

For that tremendous day,

And fill us now with watchful care,

And stir us up to pray !

To pray and wait the hour,

That awful hour, unknown,

When, rob'd in majesty and pow'r,

Thou shalt from heav'n come down,

The IMMORTAL SON OF MAN,

To judge the human race,

With all Thy Father's dazzling train,

With all Thy glorious grace !

O, may we all be found,

Obedient to Thy word !

Attentive to the trumpet's sound,

And 'looking for the Lord !'

O, may we thus ensure,

Our lot among 'the bless'd !'

And watch a moment, to secure

AN EVERLASTING REST !”

REV. XVIII. 9—24.

KINGS AND MERCHANTS MOURN OVER BABYLON.

—HER MERCHANDIZE, &c., DEPARTED.—THE LAMENTATION OVER HER.—THE REJOICING OF GOD'S PROPHETS, &c.—MIGHTY ANGEL, WITH MILLSTONE.—UTTER EXTINCTION OF THE GREAT CITY.—THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS IN HER.

9.—And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10.—Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11.—And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandize any more: 12.—The merchandize of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13.—And cinnamon, and odours,

and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14.—And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15.—The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16.—And saying, Alas, alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, 17.—For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18.—And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like unto this great city! 19.—And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made

desolate. 20.—Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her. 21.—And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22.—And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee ; 23.—And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee : for thy merchants were the great men of the earth ; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24.—And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

9.—The “*Angel*,” descending from heaven against Babylon, continues to describe to the prophet

of the Church, other particulars of much interest relating to the approaching catastrophe, the manner of her fall, and the effect of her sudden and irrevocable ruin, when beheld by persons of different classes and conditions in society who had dealings with her.

“*The kings of the earth*” are first mentioned, as they who had most familiar intercourse and lordly converse with her, partaking of her indulgences, blandishments, and fostering her unlawful pretensions and oppressions. They “*bewail and lament for her,*” as they see “*the smoke*” of her burning, and keep “*afar off,*” like treacherous friends, unwilling to help a neighbour in distress, and lest they should be involved—as conscience tells them they deserve—in the dire “torment” of her calamity, saying—

10.—“Alas, alas! that great city Babylon,
That mighty city!
For in one hour is thy judgment come!”

11.—“*The merchants of the earth,*”* who belong to her, are next remarked among those who “*weep and mourn over her,*” as having made gain and

* See Ezek. xxvii. 27—36; 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. These merchants, called (ver. 23) “*the great men of the earth,*” represent their own people, who, as “false teachers”—cardinals, bishops, priests, and others, “bringing in damnable heresies,” while multitudes follow “*their pernicious ways,*” through whom “*the way of truth is evil spoken of.*” The apostle adds, as if foreseeing the evil consequences of this system and rich mart of all kinds of

“*become rich*” (ver. 15) by her means; through the worldly craft and covetousness, taught by her; through the various mercenary arts employed for extorting money and gifts from the pockets of the people, and the meretricious adornments in her pompous ritual, and treasured offerings at her costly shrines. Now their brisk trade is stopped; their merchandize has no buyers; their ungodly gains are ended; *their occupation is gone for ever!*

12.—The many “wares”—articles and commodities of Church-“merchandize”—in which Rome and her traffickers largely excelled and dealt—are next adduced and specified, in a long list, and with much preciseness of detail; each and all, no doubt, having reference more or less to some portions of the gaudy decorations, the ornate ceremonial, and meretricious attractions of her idolatrous worship and practice. By the articles of “*gold and silver*,” we shall be reminded of such as *great Diana’s shrines*, made by Demetrius for the heathen idolatries of Ephesus, and which “*brought much gain to the craftsmen*,”* and of the numerous images and ornaments, “*idols of silver and gold*,” workmanship of “*gold and silver*” in embroidery for sacerdotal vestments, in statues, and

“wares” for religious robbery and deception—“*Through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you; whose judgment of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*” * Acts xix. 24.

for altars; the costly pearls and "*precious stones*,"* of Popes' "*tiaras*" and crosiers, votive sacrifices and gifts; the "*fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet*," of the robes and dresses of the priesthood, the complex changes of garments, and millinery-trappings for the officers and dignitaries of the Church; the odoriferous "*thyine wood*,"† and "*all manner of vessels of ivory, and of the most precious wood, brass, iron, and marble*," for Church furniture, embellishments, and carvings of countless figures, modelled and imagined, of "*saints*;" the "*cinnamon and odours*" with "*frankincense*" of *religious perfumery*, for sacrificial purposes, not permitted in the *New Testament Church*, and derogatory to the honour of Christ's perfected Atonement and Intercession, as the only "*sweet Incense*" now needed or allowed in the Gospel-temple; "*the ointments*" and "*oil*," for the "*extreme unction*," and other vain anointings, instead of the invocation of the Holy Spirit and of His all-sufficient grace and seven-fold gifts; "*the wine*" for the "*carnivals*" and also in the "*mass*," and this basely refused to the laity, as

* See Rev. xvii. 4.

† The word "*θυϊνον*," for "*thyine wood*," does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Its reference is thought to be to a species of sweet-scented wood, used for sacred and costly vessels and statues, and made from an evergreen African tree of the cedar or cypress kind. The wood, when burnt, gives out an agreeable perfume, and was used in heathen sacrifices. Hence the origin of its name, from "*θυω*," "*to sacrifice*."

it all but the priests were precluded from a thankful remembrance of their Saviour's sin-cleansing "*blood*" at the "Supper of the Lord;" "*the fine flour and wheat*," made into "cakes for the queen of Heaven," and sacramental *wafers* for the host—the only part of the Holy Communion participated in by the people, contrary to apostolic usage and the institution of Christ;* "*the beasts and sheep*," "*horses and chariots*," the delicious "*fruits*," the servile "*bodies*" and (enslaved) "*souls*"† for every thing that was purchaseable and saleable, and which helped to add to her "Church" gains and secular profits, whether in articles necessary for food, or superfluous for enjoyment, for the "goodly" care of the body, or

* The command of Christ, in ordaining the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with respect to the "*wine*" poured out, "*Drink ye all of it*," (Matt. xxvi. 27) and the instructions especially given by revelation to St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23—26), concluding, "*As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come*"—testify clearly against Rome for denying the cup to the laity.

† The traffic in "*slaves*," "*σώματα*," "*bodies*," and in "*souls of men*." As to the former, it has been referred to the gains which Rome has made by enslaving great numbers of her people, in cloistered convents, nunneries, and monastic institutions, shutting them up in obscurity, securing much of their property, and exercising a *despotic* influence over their persons; the latter, to the traffic arising from *indulgences*, *penances*, *anathemas*, *confessionals*, and the terrors of *purgatory*, whereby "*souls*" have been captivated, estates have been robbed, and the coffers and revenues of the Church enriched, at the expense of deluded, frightened, unredeemed victims of her *avarice*.

the “dainty” indulgence of the soul, for carnal concupiscence or spiritual oppression and imposture. All these things are mourned for by her “*merchants*” with great regret and amazement, as having passed away from them, no more to be found in Rome, or recovered, or enjoyed by her, *for ever*.

15.—Like “*the kings of the earth*,” who were first brought on the scene as “chief mourners;” the “*merchants of the earth*” next, whose trade was enriched by her traffic, and therefore dolefully concerned at the loss of the things above mentioned, “*stand afar off for the fear of her torment*”—

16.—And seem to say, with much “weeping and wailing”—

“Alas, alas that great city!

That was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet,
And decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls,
For in one hour* so great riches is come to nought!”

17.—Each “*shipmaster*” and ship’s “company,” with “*sailors*” and sea-faring men that have business on the waters, are next added to close the mournful cavalcade of “*the weeping and wailing*” over the lost gains of “great Babylon.”* These, likewise,

* The repeated mention of the judgment coming “*in one hour*” (ver. x. 17, 19), or, “*in one day*” (ver. 8), would seem to point out a very short period, at last, for its full execution; either meaning a most sudden and rapid downfall within a year, or even its “twelfth” or “twenty-fourth” part.

as they behold from their ships, on the ill-fated dangerous shores, "*the smoke of her burning,*" "*afar off,*" unite in the bitter accumulating cry, saying—

"*What city is like unto this great city !*"*

18.—Then, "*casting dust on their heads*"—as if determined on manifesting the greatest *external* display of excitement in their mourning—they repeat the dirge following, with spontaneous floods of briny tears—

"Alas, alas that great city !

Wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea,

By reason of her costliness !

For in one hour is she made desolate !"

One can scarcely help remarking, in the account of this "Church" traffic, and the enumeration of Rome's mourners, how each lamentation seems to bear upon some feature or other of that mammon-love and dishonest idolatrous avarice which distinguished the traitor-apostle, and who is described as "*a thief and having the bag,*" and "*the son*

* It has been supposed by some, that this prophecy cannot fully apply to Rome in modern times, because she cannot be considered such a *great commercial city* as the expressions used in this chapter would appear to imply concerning her. But, it must be remembered, that the greatness here spoken of, refers more to Rome as a *great religious community*, exercising commercial sway and influence, of a spiritual kind, over Christendom, far beyond the mere confines and limit of her own territorial locality.

of perdition;”* how each class, from “*the king*” on his throne to the common “*seaman*” on his vessel—from the *Pope or cardinal* to the meanest *acolyte*—are mourners entirely on the grounds of *selfishness*. They do not sorrow for the “lost” with any real affection; but from self-interested and *mercenary* motives; because the source of their ungodly delights and their worldly gains are all gone. It is not the heartfelt mourning of one true friend for another. Alas! where shall we find such friendship among “thieves?”—robbers of God and His sanctuary? A false friend “*stands afar off*” in the day of our calamity; but a true friend draws nigh, and enters into closest sympathy with us. The condolence of the “false,” resembles that of Job’s friends; looking at him from their security, “*afar off*,” while he sits low and depressed, in the “ashes” of deep affliction. Such are rightly described as “miserable comforters.”† A true Christian friend is like the “*brother born for adversity*,” and one, even, that “*sticketh closer than a brother*.”‡ But the “*men of this world*,” who have “their treasure” (only) in this life, are generally hardened against brotherly sympathy. And the men of a corrupt religious creed can show no real soundness of heart in the day of a brother’s calamity. They are steeled by the practice of deception against the true spirit of

* John xii. 6; xvii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3.

† See Job ii. 12, and xvi. 2. ‡ Prov. xvii. 17; xviii. 24.

compassion. They have not even compassion upon “their own souls,” nor courage to use the means of delivering themselves from the arms of the syren of selfishness, and out of the snares of the great destroyer.

20.—While the worldly, the wicked, and the unbelieving seem sorely *mourning* over the fall of Babylon, on the one side; the godly and upright children of God, sound in the *true Church* and doctrines of “the apostles and prophets,” are called to “*rejoice*,” not in gladness over “*the iniquity*” or calamity of others, which would not be consistent with true religion and charity;* but as witnessing the assertion of the sovereignty of God’s power and justice, the fulfilment of His sacred word of promise and prophecy, and the liberation of “the Church” of God from pestilential doctrine and the oppression of the enemy—

“Rejoice over her, Thou heaven,
And ye holy apostles and prophets!†
For God hath avenged you on her!”

* 1 Cor. xiii. 6.

† The expressions would include (as in ch. xix.) the whole redeemed Church of God, “*triumphant*” and “*militant*.” Such legitimate rejoicing over the fall of Assyrian Babylon is declared by the prophet (Jer. li. 47, 48)—

“I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon,
And her whole land shall be confounded,
And all her slain shall fall in the midst of her,
Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein,
Shall sing for Babylon!” (See also Ps. lvi. 10, 11.)

21.—Now, the crisis of Rome is come, and her irreparable fall is announced in the most significant act and manner possible. A mighty "angel," entrusted with the last work of vengeance and recompence by JEHOVAH, is seen testifying, by a symbolical and most striking illustration, the sudden and *utter ruin* of the great city, determined upon in the counsels of heaven. He takes up a piece of rock, or great stone, resembling in size and form, a great "*millstone*," and hurls it into the sea, "*with violence*," saying—

"Thus shall that great city be thrown down,
And shall be found no more at all!"

22, 23.—And, then, turning and apostrophizing her, to prove to the world that she can *never rise* as a city *to disturb the people of God* again, or show any signs of civil life or mechanical skill, or any symptoms of light or grace, of gladness or rejoicing, of trade or commerce, social or ecclesiastical—he addresses her in the stern words of IRREVERSIBLE DOOM—

"The voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters,
Shall be heard no more at all in thee!
And no craftsman, of whatsoever craft,
Shall be found any more in thee!
And the sound of a millstone,
Shall be heard no more at all in thee!
And the light of a candle,
Shall shine no more at all in thee!
The voice of the bridegroom and the bride,
Shall be heard no more at all in thee!—
For thy merchants were the great ones of the earth—
For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived!"

24.—The *great and leading cause* of this complete and final overthrow of the devoted city is summarily added, on supreme authority of the same heaven-directed angel's voice—to convince the suffering Church of *the ever watchful eye of her guardian God upon her*, and to teach mankind at large, of the sure, though tardy, execution of retributive *justice* on all the cruel, the blood-thirsty, and impenitent. It is this—“*There was found in her*” the martyr—“*blood of prophets and of saints,*” and of “all” classes of those “*that were slain in the (Roman) earth*” *—

“As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall,
So, at Babylon, shall fall the slain of all the earth.” †

The requital must be just, *in both cases*, because God has announced it. And, as certainly as He performed it literally and to the full extent on the ancient persecutor and slayer of Israel; so, we believe, He will execute it on *the modern Assyrian*

* See Rev. ix. 21.—The sufferers and “*slain*” for the sake of Jesus Christ, by the tyranny and cruelty of Rome—whether Pagan or Papal—are referred to Rev. i. 9 (John banished to Patmos); ii. 10—13 (when Antipas, “the faithful martyr,” was slain in Pergamos, and the “tribulation of ten years” is signified); vi. 9—11 (“the souls underneath the altar”); xi. 7 (war by Papal Rome against, and killing the “witnesses”); vii. 15, xii. 11—13 (the dragon of Popery “wars with the saints”); xvi. 6 (“blood of saints and prophets” shed by the same); xvii. 6 (Woman, or Church, “drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.”)

† Jer. li. 49.

"murderer" of the prophets, and saints, and Christians of all classes—bishops, clergy, and laity—who have suffered in thousands and tens of thousands at her hands! And thus, not only the crime of heathen Rome, in this respect, will be expiated, but the far greater sins of Rome Papal and nominally Christian; imbruing her hands deeply and determinedly in the blood of "brethren," and hence entailing the most complete and comprehensive punishment!*

O let the desolating judgment on doomed Rome warn every one that would deliver his soul, to "flee" out of her at once, and have nothing to do with the traffic or merchandize of the corrupt city. The faithful in Christ's holy Church cannot be too wary against the danger of her subtle devices, which are still exercised with every kind

* The number of Christians "slain" by the Papacy exceeds, by a hundred times, those slain under the pagan emperors. This fact is stamped and stereotyped by the stubborn page of history, and cannot be refuted. Even medals have been struck, at Rome, in their commemoration. Witness the "*Huguenotorum strages*," A.D. 1572, when from 70,000 to 100,000 suffered. Again, during and after the thirteenth century, in repeated crusades against the Albigenses, Waldenses, Hussites, &c., it is credibly affirmed in history that nearly a million were sacrificed. Again, after the institution of the order of Jesuits, it is reckoned that 900,000 suffered as *heretics*. In the Netherlands 36,000 fell by the common hangman; besides many more thousands under the cruel Inquisition and persecutions in Spain, France, England, Ireland, &c.

of craft and cunning, artifice and assault, secret and open; and with new and desperate efforts to regain her lost ground in our beloved land. At the same time, let there be no doubt of the sure and approaching fulfilment of these undeniable predictions. Rome's days are numbered. The finishing stroke is decreed, and will fall soon, and very probably from an unseen hand, where she little expects it—somewhat like Cyrus, at midnight, entering Babylon while secure in her festivity. We should not, indeed, rejoice in her destruction, except as forced to do so from feelings of happiness in our own deliverance. We should mourn sincerely over her obduracy and impenitence; while we cannot but be religiously glad at God's vindication of His honour, and the world's emancipation from a *grinding bondage*—from the greatest curse of social and spiritual vassalage ever experienced by the human race.

“Earth's joys are but a dream! Its destiny
Is but decay and death! Its fairest form
Sunshine and shadow mixed! Its brightest day,
A rainbow braided on the wreaths of storm!

Yet there is a blessedness that changeth not,
A rest with God, a life that cannot die;
A better portion, and a brighter lot,
A home with Christ, a heritage on high!

“As tempest makes returning calm more dear,
 And darkest midnight makes the brightest star,
 E’en so to us, when all is ended here,
 Shall be the past, remembered from afar.

Then welcome change and death! Since these alone
 Can break life’s fetters and dissolve its spell!
 Welcome all present change which speeds us on,
 So swift to that which is “unchangeable!”

REV. XIX. 1—10.

THE “GREAT VOICE” OF PRAISE.—“ALLELUIAS.”
 —TRIUMPH OVER THE CORRUPTER OF THE
 EARTH.—“THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS
 COME.”—THE BRIDE ARRAYED IN WHITE.—THE
 “BLESSED” WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MAR-
 RIAGE SUPPER.—NO WORSHIP OF ANGELS.

AND after these things I heard a great
 voice of much people in heaven,
 saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory,
 and honour, and power, unto the Lord our
 God: 2.—For true and righteous *are* his
 judgments: for he hath judged the great
 whore, which did corrupt the earth with
 her fornication, and hath avenged the
 blood of his servants at her hand. 3.—
 And again they said, Alleluia. And her

smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4.—And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5.—And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6.—And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7.—Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8.—And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9.—And he said unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10.—And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have

the testimony of Jesus : worship God : for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

1.—The call to “*rejoice*”* is quickly and loudly responded to by the true Church “*Catholic*,” now raised above that which was falsely called the “*Roman Catholic*.” The loud response is observable in the “*great voice of much people in heaven*”—the Church triumphant in heaven above, and the united faithful in the redeemed Church below, taking up the sound of swelling *praise*.

2, 3.—They sing together in one loud accordant strain, because God “hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand ;” and the “*great voice*” of their united thanksgiving for His mercies is concentrated in one grand word,

“ALLELUIA !”†

Ascribing—with repeated utterances—the same Hebrew “Hallel” of the Psalms‡—as they see

* Rev. xviii. 20.

† “*Alleluia*,” Greek, is the same as “*Hallelujah*,” Hebrew—symbolizing, as before noticed, Rev. ix. 11, the united voices of Gentiles and Jews in the true Christian Church.

‡ See Ps. 146 to 150—each beginning with the Hebrew “הלל יי” (“*Praise ye the Lord*,”) and closing the whole Book of Psalms with unbroken praise.

Of these six Psalms, Bp. Horne remarks, in the argument

“*the smoke*” of the “great city” rise, and no more to be extinguished “*for ever and ever*” *—

“ALLELUIA! Salvation, and glory, honour and power,
Unto the Lord our God!”

4.—There is, also, some special mention, reviving the memory of the representative hierarchy of the redeemed in the temple above, and the “*cherubim*” ministering to the “*heirs of salvation*”—before described as “*twenty-four elders, and four living creatures*”—that they fall down before God, in worship of Him that sitteth on the throne, and add, to the united praise of the Church, their inspired “AMEN” and “ALLELUIA.”

5.—Then a voice is heard coming out “from the throne,” as a command communicated to believing kings, princes, and governors of the earth (which is “God’s throne”) and by them to

at the heading of Ps. 145—“Hitherto, in this Divine Book, we have been presented with chequered scenes of danger and deliverance, distress and mercy. The voice of complaint hath sometimes been succeeded by that of thanksgiving; and praise, at other times, been terminated in prayer. But now, as if the days of mourning in Zion were ended, we hear no more of the Messiah as a man of sorrows, or of the Church as despised and afflicted, after the same example, in the world. Henceforth, we seem not to be upon earth, but in heaven, mingling with celestial spirits around the throne, and singing the praises of our God and King, extolling His greatness, His might, His glory, His justice, His mercy, the majesty of His kingdom, and all His adorable perfections and wondrous works.”

* See Rev. xviii. 9—10; compare Gen. xix. 28, Isa. xiii. 19, 20.

their people of all classes, summoning all to public praise and national thanksgiving,* saying—

“Praise our God, all ye His servants,
And ye that fear Him, both small and great!”

6.—Upon this, the assemblies of God’s people in the ransomed and delivered Church are crowded with great multitudes of ardent and enthusiastic worshippers, who take up the song of praise, loud as the sound of “*many waters*,” or as the roll of “mighty thunderings”—even as on the occasion of the royal festival of the glorious marriage between Christ and His Church—saying, in one prolonged “Hallelujah Chorus”—

“Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!
Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him;
For the marriage of the Lamb is come,
And His wife hath made herself ready!”

The Lord’s ancient people, *the Jews*, who may be described as using, among others, the “Hallel” Psalms of praise, of old, as they ascended up to Jerusalem on their return from the “seventy years” of their captivity in Babylon,† are

* There was an instance of this in the reign of our George III., A.D. 1815, when a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God was set apart for the victory over Napoleon at Waterloo, and the deposing of one who may be considered the “seventh” (imperial) head of “the beast.”

† See Ps. cxxvi., and several that follow; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 21.—23; Jer. xxv. 11, 12, xxix. 10; Dan. ix. 2.

peculiarly interested in this putting down of their great enemy, the modern "Babylon." No people have ever been more hated or more ill-treated by Rome, than the people of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She has been their hinderer and persecutor on the right and left. *In the fall of Rome will be the rise of Jerusalem.* Even now, we see many tokens of returning mercy to Israel; political disabilities, long prejudices, rife and strong against them in bigoted Roman Catholic countries, are being gradually removed as those countries are becoming *free* of Rome. And when their great enemy, as a political power, is thrust out of the way, the friends of long scattered and peeled, down-trodden and despised Israel, may soon look for her enlargement and regeneration, not merely to great political influence among the Gentiles, but to her establishment in her own land, and *conversion* soon afterwards to the faith of Christ; "*for there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob,*" and "*so all Israel shall be saved.*"*

* Rom. xi. 25, 26. The present "*blindness*"—since their dispersion, and the destruction of their temple, about A.D. 70, is stated by St. Paul, only to be "*in part*"—not total and continual. The "*veil*," in God's appointed time "*shall be taken away.*" (2 Cor. iii. 14—16.) His "*gifts and calling*" are "*without repentance*"—*i.e.*, without change of purpose—whether as regards nations or individuals; and "*the blindness,*" or "*hardness,*" only lasts "*until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in;*" and of this we are seeing manifest symptoms, pointing to the "*end,*" when "*the*

7.—The great fact of the Bridegroom's coming to His Church seems plainly intimated. The true Church, of united Jew and Gentile, is figuratively known from the prophets and apostles, and before in the language of the Apocalypse,* as the Bride or Wife of Christ. These expressions testify to “*the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church.*” The perfect and heavenly union is fulfilled, as far as regards individuals, when each one who believes is united by a living faith, in heart and soul, to His fold. The faithful are said to be “*members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*”† But the union of the whole body has never yet been manifested, according to Christ's prayer, which remains to be fulfilled—“*As Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me;‡*” and, according to the

Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” (Matt xxiv. 14).

* See Rev. xii. 1, 2; also, Ps. xlv.; Isa. liv. 4—6, lxii. 4, 5; and Matt. xxv. 1, &c.; where the word “*Bridegroom*” can only be referred to Christ; as, also, John iii. 29. The mystical “*marriage*”-union betwixt Christ and His Church is represented in the parable of “*the marriage of the king's son,*” Matt. xxii. 2, &c.; and the “*Marriage Supper,*” Luke xiv. 16, &c.; also alluded to in Rev. iii. 20. This imagery is said to be common in Arabian and Persian poems.

† See Ephes. v. 30—32; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 27; also Jer. iii. 14, xxxi. 32; Hos. ii. 16—20.

‡ John xvii. 21.

announcements, before noticed, that His triumphant coming in conquest over His enemies, and for the glorifying of His Church in union with Himself, shall be as the festal joy of a "marriage supper," by the manifest happiness of the "Bride" in the presence of the "Bridegroom."*

8.—To the true Church, or Bride of Christ, prepared to meet the Bridegroom at His coming, it is granted, at this joyful season, that she should appear in her genuine garb of purity and felicity, coming out completely from her "wilderness" obscurity,† and arrayed in "*the fine linen, clean and white*,"‡ peculiar to a bride, and customary at the bridal banquet, significant also "of *the righteousness of saints*." Then the prophet

* See Luke xv.; Isa. xxv. 5, 6; and 1 John iii. 2, 3. The "*marriage supper*" was well known, in Jewish customs, as an important part of the wedding festival, and was figurative of the felicity of heaven. We may well feel a hope to be included, through faith in Jesus, in the rich blessing implied in the words:—"Blessed are they which are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb."—"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

† See Rev. xii. 1—6, where the *Church* is described as a "*Woman clothed with the sun*," &c., and obliged to fly before the persecuting "dragon" into "the wilderness," and stay there 1,260 years. Her *complete* emergence—though preparatory tokens of deliverance preceded, as in 1588 and 1800—cannot be dated before the period of Popery's entire overthrow, and the Lord's second advent "*with all His saints*." (See Appendix II. Comparison drawn between the True Church and False.)

‡ The "*white*," "*λαμπρον*," or "*bright*," and splendid colour

describes the beauty of this apparel, in the glowing language of Ps. xlv.—

"The king's daughter is all glorious within,
Her clothing is of wrought gold !
She shall be brought unto the king
In raiment of needlework :
The virgins, her companions, that follow her,
Shall be brought unto Thee !
With joy and gladness shall they be brought ;
They shall enter into the king's palace."

here mentioned, has been before alluded to as "*λευκον*," "emblematic" of purity, innocence, excellence, victory, and triumph. (See Rev. i. 1—11, iii. 4, 5, iv. 4, 11, vii. 9—14, xviii. 6.)

It must be ever borne in mind that the "*fine linen, clean and white*," granted as the raiment of the Bride, "*given*," (Rev. vi. 11) and figurative of "*the righteousness of saints*," is not *their own*, nor of their own making or procuring. It is expressly stated to be "*granted to them*" by their Lord—"the Lord our Righteousness." It cannot be too frequently impressed upon the enquiring mind, that one of the main doctrines of the Gospel is "*justification by faith*"—that "*in the Lord alone we have righteousness and strength*." In Him "*shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*"—in "*the righteousness which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ*." (See Rom. iii. 25, 26, Philip. iii. 9.) It may be added, that in the parable of the "*marriage of the king's son*," (Matt. xxii. 1, &c.) the fact of *not having on "the wedding garment"* is the sole reason which excludes from the feast ; and this, we know, is the garment *always provided*, by the Master, Ruler, or King, for His guests whom He invites—to be taken and put on by them. The *putting this on* is the act of *justifying faith* ; the *wearing it*, is the type of the life of *practical holiness* ; and both are necessary to salvation, for "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord*." (Heb. xii. 10, 14.)

A further view of the perfect and final enthronement and happiness of the Church with Christ as her Head, "*prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*," is seen in Rev. xxi. 2.

9.—The “*blessing*” will be great indeed, worthy of being announced by a voice from heaven, and enjoined upon John in the vision, that it should be immediately transferred, with particular care, *to writing*—a “*blessing*” to be enjoyed by all those who are “*called*” by the “*Bridegroom*,” when He comes, and permitted to sit down with Him at the “*Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.” All who are thus invited to the fruition of distinguished honour and happiness, as the Bride and her companions, in the glorious advent of the Lord of the Church upon earth, must have been previously “*called*,” by God’s grace, to the knowledge of Christ and faith in His name, and must have obeyed the call and proved themselves “*chosen*, and *faithful*.” They are before described as (1), those who hear the voice of Christ, the Beloved of the Father, when He stands, as it were, with His light and grace, at the door of the sinner’s heart, and by His Spirit appeals and knocks for entrance, and promises to the willing and compliant, who “*overcome*,” a seat at His table, and a place with Him on His throne (Rev. iii. 20, 21); (2), those who are “*redeemed to God*” by the blood of the Lamb, and made “*kings and priests unto God*,” and who are to “*reign on the earth*,” (3), those who were “*slain for the word of God*,” and for the testimony which they held, and who had “*white robes given unto every one of them*,” (Rev. vi. 9—11); and (4), such as have the “*seal*

of the living God” on their foreheads,” and among the great multitude” clothed in white robes and bearing “palms” in their hands, (Rev. vii. 3, 9), who are true worshippers in “*the temple of God*” (Rev. xi.), whose “*names are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” (Rev. xiii. 8), who are able to sing the “*new song*” of salvation, being undefiled in heart and life as “*virgins*,” and “*redeemed from the earth*,” they who “*follow the Lamb*,” have “*the patience of saints*,” have no “*mark of the beast*,” and are “*blessed*” in the Lord, living and dying in Him (Rev. xiv. 3, 11—13); they who as “*harpers on the sea of glass*,” have gotten the victory “*over the beast, and his image, and mark, and name-number*,” who are “*the blessed*,” and have “*watched*” and “*kept their garments*” of sanctification and honour; and finally, who “*are with the Lamb*” in His last victory, and on His side, having the distinctive character of “*called, and chosen, and faithful*.”

10.—At the angel’s announcement that “*these are the true sayings of God*” with the great and glorious *beatitude* of the Bride and saints of God in their conquest with Christ, and consummate felicity when called to His “*Marriage Supper*”—John seems overcome with feelings of rapturous delight, and adoring and reverential thanksgiving, and is about to prostrate himself in the act and posture of Divine worship at the feet of him, who brought and proclaimed the glad tidings from

heaven. But he is immediately restrained, and told, “*See thou do it not!*” and that he is only one of those who wait upon God in His temple, and as “*fellow-servant*” with himself and those who bear to the world “*the testimony of Jesus;*” *that testimony* being the “*spirit of (all) prophecy,*”* the sum and substance, the beginning and ending of all Revelation; since Jesus Christ Himself, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is the only proper object of human “worship”—“the Author and Finisher of our faith;” the Lord and “Bridegroom of the Church;” the “*Alpha and Omega*”—the “First and the Last,” for man’s salvation and glory unto eternal life.†

* The passage (verse 10) may require a few words of further explanation. One intention of it, no doubt, is to take off the mind of the Church from angel-worship, and from creature-admiration, either when “servants of God” are announcing some great and blessed truths, or standing high in privilege or talent in preaching the Gospel among fellow-creatures. It attacks the false doctrine of Rome in enjoining saint worship—in exalting angels and “Virgin,” Popes and priestly potentates, in honour even above Christ. It rebukes, also, the “vain conceit” of some, whether in Popish, or in other Churches professing to be more pure, of extolling and magnifying feeble and fallible “*man,*” who may bring “the message” from God to us, though only our fellow-servant and one of “our brethren,” to the depreciation of the *Master above all*, the Great First “*Witness*” for the Father in the world—having all the excellencies of the Divine Spirit—of supreme power and wisdom, while the best of men only have that treasure in “earthen vessels.” (See 2 Cor. iv. 7, 8, also Rev. xxii. 8, 9.)

† See Rev. i. 5, 8, 17, 18, &c.

May our chief desire be to give honour, love, and adoration to Christ, as “God manifest in the flesh”—the Revealer of the Father to our souls, the “*True and Faithful Witness*” of all that is necessary for our knowing and doing the Father’s will upon earth, even as it is known and done “*in heaven.*” Let us thus be ready to join in the spirit of the “hallelujah chorus” sung by angels and saints above and the united redeemed Church below, gathered from among Jews and Gentiles; ascribing “*Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God!*” And, hereafter, when He comes to receive His own to Himself to meet Him in the air, may we be welcomed by Him, and descend together with Him; receiving the royal “*blessing,*” which “He will then pronounce to all who love and fear Him,” in the bridal-day of “the Lamb;” when He comes, as “*Zion’s King,*” to “*reign victorious*”—to be “*glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*”*

“Bride of the Lamb, awake! awake!

Why sleep for sorrow now?

The hope of glory, Christ is thine,

The child of glory thou!

Thy spirit, through the lonely night,

From earthly joys apart,

Hath sighed for one that’s far away,

The BRIDEGROOM of thy heart!

* 2 Thess. i. 10.

“HE COMES!—for Oh, His yearning heart
 No more can brook delay,
 To scenes of full unmingled joy,
 To call His BRIDE away!

This earth, the scene of all His woe—
 A homeless “wild” to thee!
 Full soon upon His heavenly throne
 Its rightful KING shall see!

Thou, too, shalt reign! He will not wear
 The crown of bliss alone!
 And earth His royal BRIDE shall see
 Beside Him on the throne!

Then, weep no more! 'Tis all thine own,
 His crown, His joy Divine!
 And, sweeter far than all beside,
 He, HE HIMSELF, is thine!”

REV. XIX. 11—21.

HEAVEN OPENED.—CHRIST APPEARING AS CONQUEROR AND KING WITH “MANY CROWNS.”—THE ANGEL IN “THE SUN.”—THE “WAR WITH THE LAMB.”—THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET TAKEN.—THE REMNANT SLAIN BY THE SWORD OF THE WORD.

11.—And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12.—His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13.—And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14.—And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15.—And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16.—And he hath on

his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 17.—And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18.—That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great. 19.—And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20.—And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21.—And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

11.—Before the great “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” takes place, and while “the Bride,” or Church of God, is “*making herself ready*” for the Lord’s advent, one more great conflict of nations, spoken of previously as “*Armageddon*” and the “*treading of the vintage without the city*,”* must arise; and the battle must be fought with Christ, figuratively, at the head of “*the armies of heaven*,” for it is decidedly the “great and terrible day of the Lord.”†

The “heaven” opens for His leaving the Father’s throne. “*Behold*,” he is seen by the apostle as one seated on a “*white horse*,” and, as when, in the vision of the first seal, he went forth, “*conquering and to conquer*.”‡ He is known now by an attribute more particularly and personally applicable to Himself as “THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE;” coming, according to His promise, “in the clouds of heaven,” when “*every eye shall see Him*,”§ to judge the nations in righteousness; to war down by His rule, and humble to the dust every adversary and opponent,

* See Rev. xvi. 16, and xiv. 10.

† Joel ii. 11; iii. 1; Zeph. ii. 14—16; Mal. iv. 1.

‡ Rev. vi. 2.

§ Rev. i. 7. The Apocalypse plainly states the great fact of *Christ’s second Personal Advent*, from first to last. It begins with it, reveals it most fully in this chapter as taking place before the millennium, and contains frequent invitations to prepare for it, even to the closing words of the book. Rev. i. 25; ii. 11; iii. 3; xvi. 15; xxii. 20. (See enlarged note to ver. 14.)

and exalt to “*glory and honour and immortality*” his tried and faithful friends.

12.—He now appears with eyes of flaming fire, taking vengeance;* and on *His* head not one, but “*many crowns*,” in token of “*the kingdoms of this world now become in fact, as they were before by promise, the kingdoms of our Lord† and of His Christ*,” and “*all nations*” now being made to “*crown Him*,” and “*call Him blessed*,” and acknowledge His universal dominion.‡ The name He now bears is not that of His humanity, “*Jesus*;” nor even that of His God-manhood, “*Immanuel*;” but it is the *incommunicable Name* of JEHOVAH, “*the fulness of the Godhead bodily*,”

* “*Taking vengeance*”—this must be at *His second coming*. See Isa. lxi. 2; lxiii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 8; Rev. vi. 14—17. It is “*the great day of the wrath of the Lamb*.”

† See John xiv. 1, 2; Rev. xi. 15; xii. 10.

‡ In Rev. vi. 2; xiv. 14, the single “*crown*”—“*Στεφανος*”—is observed. The “*many crowns*,” or compound “*diadems*”—“*διαδηματα*”—are only seen here; showing, that now at length is come the complete assertion of Christ’s Kingship-authority—“*the kingdom, the power, and the glory*,” are about to be *His*, over all kings and their subjects. So in Ps. ii. 8, and lxxii. 8—11—

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth;
They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him;
His enemies shall lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
Yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him!
All nations shall serve Him!”

the meaning of which no man has ever yet been able to unravel and explain, being "*known only to Himself!*"*

13.—The "*vesture*," with which he is clothed, betokens the past "*sacrifice*," as well as the present "*restitution*" by "*blood*;" formerly, it was in "*the acceptable year of the Lord*," by "*the blood of the covenant*," and for the sins of the whole world; now it is the day of great account and "*vengeance of our God*;" figuratively, dipping the garment in the blood of His inveterate enemies, who "*would not have Him to reign over them*." His "*Name*," in both respects, well known with reference to the perfect revelation and fulfilment of all the purposes and decrees of heaven to mankind, is here styled, "*THE WORD OF GOD*."†

14.—He comes as "*the King*," not without His numerous and bright attendant retinue and train of followers—

*"The Lord my God shall come,
AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE."*‡

* Exod. iii. 14; vi. 3; xxxiv. 5—8. The name of "*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*," "*the Lord our Righteousness*," is that by which Christ is known, from His first advent, for the work of our redemption; but, "*Jehovah-Shammah*," "*the Lord is there*," is that by which He is to be recognized in the revelation of His second advent and "*Jerusalem's*" glory. (Ezek. xlviii. 35.)

† "*The Word*," is that name by which Christ, "*the Wisdom of God*," is best known in revealing to us on earth all "*the Father's will*." John i. 1, &c.; Heb. i. 1, &c. ‡ Zech. xiv. 5.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”* Then, “*the dead in Christ rise first*” at His appearance, and the “*living saints*” are in a moment changed and caught up to “*meet the Lord in the air;*” so that all—both in the Church above and the Church below—are here “*for ever with the Lord;*” and constitute, together with the holy angels that escort their King at His descent to earth, “*the*

* 1 Thess. iv. 16. The many plain scriptural allusions respecting *the second Appearance of Christ on this earth*, in a glorified form and kingly character, after having at His *first advent*, appeared in His condition of humiliation and suffering for sins, ought to be sufficiently convincing to a candid and unprejudiced mind; that it is an *actual personal coming of our Lord for judgment and victory*, with his saints, and not (as many persist in assuming) a mere spiritual revival and spread of religion. Take a few of the more striking passages:—(1), Dan. vii. 9—11, xiii. 22; “*One like the Son of man*” came with the clouds of heaven,” “*the Ancient of Days*”—intimating the attribute of “*eternity*”—“*came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*” (2), Zech. xiv. 3, 4, 7’ “*Then*”—when “*the day of the Lord cometh*” (ver. 1)—“*shal the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the East and toward the West, and there shall be a very great valley. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.*”, Is it possible, with any reasonableness of interpretation, to spiritualize this? (3), Mal. iv. 1, 2, “*Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, even all that d*

*armies of heaven,” “upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”**

15.—A quick and short work will the Lord make with the foe at His royal advent! He needs no long array of “*armies*,” in serried line of battle with His enemies. Those who are with Him at His coming are not supplied with “*carnal weapons*” for mortal conflict and deadly carnage; as when host encounters host in the hotly-contested field,

wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in His wings,” &c. (4), Matt. xvi. 27, “*The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*” (5), Matt. xxiv. 30, “*Then*”—after “the tribulation of those days”—“*shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*” (6), Acts i. 11, “*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*” Compare with the above, Acts iii. 20—23, and Rev. i. 7, &c.

* The colour “*white*,” and the “*linen fine and clean*,” were noticed (ver. 8) as emblematic of the Bride’s attire, “*the righteousness of saints*,” the “*beauty of holiness*,” the “*honest conversation*.” It must be mentioned that, in accordance with the whole tenour of the Apocalyptic prophecies, each event about to be really fulfilled in its general aspect, contains in detail many symbols, highly figurative, and sometimes poetic, yet all characteristic, which must, necessarily, be detached from the fact and circumstances literally connected with its accomplishment.

and missiles of destruction fall on either side, thick as “hail,” quick as the lightning’s flash, and swift as “the wings of the wind.”

The weapon of His warfare appears only as a “*sharp sword which goeth out of His mouth*”—

“He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth,
With the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.”*

His word is power: His breath is wisdom: His will is law: His pleasure is life: His frown is destruction. Before Him the wicked flee, confounded and abashed, and become silent in darkness, or “*consume away like a snail*,” before his eyes.† Even nations that are rebellious He readily reduces to obedience and submission, and subdues them in a moment; like the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces, or as quickly as a potter’s vessel is shivered to atoms with “*the rod of iron*,” or as effectually as the grapes of the vintage are “*trodden in the winepress*.”‡

16. — The coming rightful Monarch of the Church, and Ruler of nations, has been previously seen in this vision, bearing the name of “FAITHFUL AND TRUE,” and, “THE WORD OF GOD.” And, now that He is at once about to assert His authority, and vindicate His law in the earth and among all people, His other and last appellation is inscribed, as clearly as if it were seen written

* Isa. xi. 4. † Zech. xiv. 12; Ps. lviii. 7, 8.

‡ See *ante*, ch. xiv. 19, 20.

“on *His* vesture and on *His* thigh,” like a golden stream of starry-light, displaying His determined purpose to be recognized, henceforth, as Universal and Undisputed Sovereign of earth and man’s Redeemer—

“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!”*

17—19.—In wild defiance of this, the “*kings*” and “*armies*” of the earth are seen gathered together, “*against the Lord and against His anointed*” in “ARMAGEDDON,”† for the final and decisive struggle, as if to “*make war*” with Christ Himself and His saints. Like “Sanballat, the Horonite,” “Tobiah, the Ammonite,” and “Geshem, the Arabian,” with their people, all endeavouring to prevent the building of the walls of Jerusalem, after the return from the captivity in Babylon;‡ and like the Samaritans and inveterate enemies of the Lord’s House, even to the last, after Babylon has been laid low in the dust—hindering the building of the temple of the Lord;

* See Ps. lxxii. ; Dan. ii. 47 ; 1 Tim. vi. 15 ; Rev. xvii. 14.

† Rev. xvi. 13, &c., “*Three unclean spirits, like frogs*”—before referred to—proceeding out of the mouth of “the dragon,” “the beast,” and “false prophet”—the despotic, the infidel, the unchristian principles rife in the French Revolution, and subsequently—are described as gathering “*the kings of the earth and of the whole world*”—a most comprehensive expression—“*to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*” The great Armageddon-gathering has its consummation at this period of the prophecy. (Ver. 17—19.)

‡ See Neh. iii. 19 ; iv. 1, 2, &c.

these all seek the injury, and, if possible, the destruction of the people of God. The "kings of the earth and their armies," supporters of "*the beast and false prophet*," affect a furious onslaught against Christ and His Church, though coming, in power and majesty, to establish His kingdom of truth upon earth, above all the principalities and powers of darkness.

Anticipating the fearful result to the opponents of one so great and mighty, now approaching in His kingdom with His angels and saints; and as if seeing from afar the conflict already over almost before it is begun, because of the swiftness of the vengeance and the completeness of the overthrow; an angel of light appears in the skies, standing "*in the sun!*" The mighty herald from the throne proclaims a message from heaven to earth, sufficiently "loud" for all to hear, and *as clear as day*; that all birds of prey and fowls of the air, may now prepare as for a great and splendid feast and supper; may *come and gather themselves together*, and be ready to pounce upon the prey and devour the countless carcasses of the fallen, soon to lie low and prostrate after the unequal fight! The numbers "*slain of the Lord*" are of many descriptions and classes. They are composed of "kings," "captains," and "mighty men of valour;" of cavalry and their horses; of "*free and bond*;" of officers and common soldiers; of "*small and great*"; characters hostile to Christ of every

order and grade, stamp and condition—"without respect of persons."

The whole of the striking scene may signify—for it is not right for any one to speak or write dogmatically and positively on prophecy as yet unfulfilled—that, after the destruction of Rome, and about the time of Christ's second advent, there will be a great battle of nations, Gentiles and Jews, somewhere in Palestine, or near its borders;* in which the carnage and destruction of life will be more terrible, probably, than on any former occasion, from the deadlier weapons of warfare now in use; and that it will terminate, as by Divine intervention, in favour of those who hold the pure truth of the "*word of God*" against Romish and infidel errors; executed as decisively and suddenly as if by Christ Himself appearing in

* This may be concluded, as before remarked (Rev. xvi. 16), from the Jewish term and locality, "*Armageddon*," and the expression, "treading the winepress *without the city* for about 200 miles' space (Rev. xiv. 20)—the city being understood as Rome and the Roman Catholic community. See Joel iii. 2; also Zech. xiv. 1—3; Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix., which latter contains a remarkable account of the combination and mustering of "*Gog*" and his bands against the Lord and His people, in the land of Israel. The result of the *battle* being a complete overthrow and vast destruction of the combined foes. See, particularly, ver. 4—"Thou shalt fall upon the mountain of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field, to be devoured."

the clouds, and interposing His Divine and powerful arm in behalf of His faithful and chosen—the sound portion of the professing Church.

20.—The immediate consequences of the imposing presence and all-prevailing power of Christ in His Church's cause, are (1), that *every adversary of the "Gospel of the kingdom"* is so put down as to be prevented from disturbing any more the peace and progress of His Church for many generations; (2), *the civil sovereignty of Rome*, called prophetically "*the beast*," with its "eighth" and last antichristian head,* is hereupon dispelled and destroyed; (3), *the ecclesiastical and spiritually corrupt domination in Christendom, called Popery*, which—though its capital and head-quarters, at Rome, had been brought low and burnt (ch. xviii.)—was not on that account *extinct*—is now shown to be *completely subjugated*, with all its abettors, admirers, and followers that consented to be duped by its "*signs*," "*lying wonders*" and "*deceivableness of unrighteousness*," or who submitted to its "mark" and "image;" (4), infidelity, the great off-shoot of Popery, and implied under the term "*false prophet*," is consigned, with all its friends

* Probably the opposing influence of Papal France and its imperial head, in Europe and abroad—the "eldest son of the Church"—will be broken and utterly dispersed to the winds, or like a thing "taken and cast alive into the fire." (See Dan. vii. 11, 26; xi. 45.)

† The forms of unsound doctrine and irreligion compr-

and followers of every description and character, to the inevitable grave and pit of perdition, “*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*”*

21.—It is, lastly, observed, with respect to a class called “*the remnant,*” or people spared and escaped from the above destruction, and not included in the category understood by the followers of “*the beast and of the false prophet,*”† or not engaged openly in the great conflict of nations against the truth of Christ; yet men of corrupt minds and reprobate principles; men of various

hended in the symbol of “the false prophet,” and “*the remnant,*” are too many to be specified or described. Besides Popery proper—the Latin and Greek Churches, between which, as to doctrine and idolatrous practices, there is not much to choose—and rank infidelity and scepticism, all opposed to the pure “word of God,” we have in Christendom such heresies and strange delusions as Socinianism, Mormonism, Atheism, Spiritualism, Mohammedanism, and a host of other seductions and impostures—together with practical unbelief, ungodliness, wilful crime and vice, to a fearful extent. All which, we must be sure, will be put down and punished, before it can be said, “*the Lord reigneth,*” or that the sceptre of His truth and righteousness is triumphant over every enemy and opponent, or that the kingdom is come! This is shown afterwards (ver. 21) in the fate and doom of the “*remnant*” after the great battle. The “judgment” here, be it borne in mind, is on professing Christendom, beginning at the “house of God,” and not far beyond the old Roman dominions.

* See Rev. xiv. 10 and xx. 10. Also Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

† Very much the same designations are used in Dan. vii. 11, 20, and xi. 36, where the antichristian enemies are spoken of as “*the beast,*” the “*little horn,*” and the “*wilful king.*”

unscriptural tenets and parties, workers of iniquity, in many outlying quarters—that none of these can be tolerated among the regenerate Church, in “the restitution of all things,” or in the kingdoms under Christ—without arraignment and punishment. They are *discerned* by the quick eye of the Divine Judge. They are arraigned at the bar of His justice; exposed and confounded as impenitents by the “*sword of the Spirit*,” the “word out of His mouth;” and convicted as malcontents, to be banished from His presence, and consigned to the retribution which awaited and befell the parties just mentioned. (Ver. 17.)

Here we see the fulfilment of the predictions, that when Christ comes in His glory, accompanied with His saints and holy angels, He will “*render to every man according to his deeds*;”^{*} He will also “*gather out of His kingdom every thing that offends*”[†]—all that “do iniquity,” who think and act contrary to the truth, and are opposed to the holiness required of His people.

He will justly deal with all impenitents as rebellious and disobedient subjects, unfitted for His reign of peace and order, purity and integrity; and opposed to that “*unity of Spirit*,” that “*bond of peace*,” and that “*righteousness of life*,” which become the “*heirs of salvation*,” and adorn the character

^{*} Rom. ii. 6; Matt. xvi. 27: xxv. 31, *et seq.*; Rev. ii. 23; xx. 12; xxii. 12. [†] Matt. xiii. 40—42.

while they constitute the happiness of His “redeemed” Church in the “regenerated” world. But—“*then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!*”*

May all who read the words of life and truth be found, when “the King comes to see His guests,” ranged on His side who is “the Faithful and True;” having on the pure “white” wedding garment of *His righteousness*; coming out, and keeping clear and scrupulously separated from those who “*touch the unclean things*” of apostasy, Popery, infidelity, or any species of ungodliness and unchristian dishonesty.

May the Lord, “the Bridegroom” of the Church at His coming, receive us graciously, and welcome us cordially to His right hand, in an honourable position of acceptance, and to an indescribable blessing. And oh! that we may find ourselves, to our “sweet surprise,” participators in this speedy and complete triumph of Christ over all the adversaries of His name and kingdom; happy and blissful sharers, with Him, in the spoils of His conquest, and the fruits of His *victory*—a *victory* without parallel, gained by Himself “*alone*”†—bright in the sunbeam of His power, and irresistible in the plenitude of His glory!

* Matt. xiii. 43. Compare Dan. xii. 2, 3.

† We are reminded, particularly in Isa. lxiii. 2—5, and are led to believe the same from other parts, that the work both of

“Hail! to the Lord’s ANOINTED!

Great David’s greater SON;

Hail! in the time appointed,

His REIGN on earth begun!

He comes to break oppression,

To set the captive free;

To take away transgression,

And rule in equity.

He comes with succour speedy,

To those who suffer wrong;

To help the poor and needy,

And bid the weak “be strong!”

To give them songs for sighing,

Their darkness turn to light,

Whose souls, condemned and dying,

Were precious in His sight.

He shall come down like showers,

Upon the fruitful earth,

And love and joy, like flowers,

Spring in His path to birth;

Before Him on the mountains,

Shall PEACE, the herald, go;

And RIGHTEOUSNESS, in fountains,

From hill to valley flow.

For HIM shall prayer unceasing,

And daily vows ascend;

His KINGDOM, still increasing,

A kingdom “without end!”

The tide of time shall never

His covenant remove!

His NAME shall stand for ever!

That name to us—is LOVE!”

Christ’s prior *Atonement* on the cross, as well as of His next coming to destroy *antichrist and his hosts*, is effected by *Himself alone*—He “*treads the vinepress alone*,” and He consumes the “Wicked One”—the “Man of Sin”—*by the spirit of His mouth, and destroys him with the brightness of His coming.*” (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

REV. XX. 1—6.

THE ANGEL WITH "THE KEY" AND "GREAT CHAIN."—SATAN LAID HOLD OF, BOUND, CAST OUT, SHUT UP IN THE "ABYSS" FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. — MILLENNIUM. — RESURRECTION AND REIGN OF SAINTS WITH CHRIST.—SECOND DEATH, NO POWER.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2.—And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3.—And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4.—And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their

foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5.—But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 6.—Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

1.—We now approach towards the close—the final terminating scenes—of strife and confusion, of war and bloodshed, of sin and error, in this naughty, degenerate, death-stricken world of ours! SATAN,* who took occasion to deceive our first

* The word “*Satan*,” is Hebrew—“שָׂטָן” —and signifies adversary, enemy, opposer; that mysterious, malignant chief spirit of evil, who is called also by the several names (ver. 2) of “*dragon*,” “*old serpent*,” and “*devil*,” and mentioned, under particular designations, as “*prince of this world*,” (John xii. 31) “*the tempter*,” (Matt. iv. 1—11) “*Belial*,” (2 Cor. vi. 15), “*roaring lion*,” (1 Pet. v. 8) “*prince of the power of the air*,” “*the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*,” (Ephes. ii. 2), “*the god of this world*,” (2 Cor. iv. 4) &c. The Holy Scriptures fully recognize the *personality* of this evil spirit, the arch-fiend, and that of the fallen angels, of whom he is “*Prince*.” (Matt. xii. 24.) The circumstances of Satan’s fall, and of the angels with him, “*which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*,” and, in consequence of sin, “*were cast down to hell*,” (Jude 13, and 2 Pct. ii. 4) are among

parents, in Paradise, in the early days of their new-born innocence and inexperience, has had a kind of principedom here on earth, a deadening sway among God's creatures, and over all nature for nearly "six thousand years."* "*The whole creation has groaned and travailed in pain together until now*"—in an expectant state—"waiting for the adoption," (to wit) "*the redemption of the body*"—in fact, for the complete deliverance of body and soul, "*from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*"† Yes—

"The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end!
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp.

the things connected with the *origin of evil*, which are not yet clearly known, and must be left to the future state of *perfected knowledge*, hereafter to be fully revealed. It may suffice, at present, to know that Satan ("*unbound*") has been "the constant enemy of God, of Christ, of the Divine kingdom, of the followers of Christ, and of all truth; full of falsehood and all malice, and exciting and seducing to evil in every possible way." (Robinson's "Lexicon of the New Testament.")

* It has been calculated, by good authority (that of Mr. Fynes Clinton), that the age of the world before Christ was about 4,130 years. The close of the *six thousandth year* of the world has been looked upon, by Jewish and Christian writers, for a long period as betokening the introduction of a new state or dispensation. "*There remaineth a rest*" ("*σαββατισμος*") *for the people of God*," (Heb. iv. 9), called the *millennium*, or *Sabbatical rest*—"six days" of earth's toil, labour, and sorrow, the "seventh day," the Sabbath, "*the Lord's Day*," "*Rest.*"

† See Rom. viii. 20—23.

“The TIME OF REST, the promised SABBATH comes !
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
 Over a sinful world ! and what remains,
 Of this tempestuous state of human things,
 Is merely as the working of a sea
 Before a CALM, that rocks itself to rest.”*

In preparation for this glorious new scene of MILLENNIAL REST, and significant of its immediate approach—after the previous casting aside of all remaining adversaries of Christ and His kingdom (ver. 19)—an “Angel” appears in the vision before John, coming down from heaven; clothed with the *insignia* of high authority and complete executive power; with “*the key*” in his hand, which opens and shuts the “bottomless pit,” the prison-house of Satan—and “*a great chain*,” emblematic of the sure confining down of this subtle evil spirit, the last adversary of Christ†—hitherto the deceiver, accuser, and destroyer of the human race, but ever having bounds set to his malignant instigation and pernicious influence.

2.—The work, which is entrusted to the angel of light, is *speedily executed* upon the Prince of Darkness. The doors of the abyss are already

* From Cowper's poem, “Winter Walk at Noon.”

† The “*bruising*” of the serpent's head—“Satan” seen, “*like lightning, fall from heaven*”—“*the prince of this world judged*”—are each intimations of the final binding, burning, &c. (See Gen. iii. 15; Luke x. 18; John xvi. 11.)

open, through which “Satan” has been previously permitted to have free egress, for purposes of a *judicial and punitive kind*, for temptation and discipline, best known to the inscrutable wisdom of God; and all to be overruled, in the end, to the greater glory of His mighty and sovereign name. The “*strong man armed*,”* cannot long evade the grasp of the stronger “angel” of divine justice. The decree has gone forth. His liberty to tempt is to be taken from him: his craft for deceiving is to be curbed, “*a hook is to be placed in his nose, and a bridle in his lips*.”† His very presence upon Christ’s earth is to be forbidden. His accusing power with the Father of Heaven, against the peace of His children, is to be *stopped*. Strong fetters are to be placed upon his feet, and a stumbling-block upon his steps; during the visible presence and manifested reign of Christ with His saints, over earth, and air, and the subject nations —“*for a thousand years!*”

3.—To show the progress‡ of this restrictive

* Luke xi. 21, 22. † 2 Kings xix. 28; Isa. xxxvii. 29.

‡ The separate acts described in the binding down of Satan may signify, that the restraining power put upon the Evil one, and his consequent waning influence will be somewhat *gradual*. See Rev. xi. 17, 18 (at the “*seventh trumpet*”), and Rev. xii. 9, 10, where we observe a prior and pre-figurative *fall* of “*the dragon*” to the earth, from the higher places of the “*air*” in the prospect of his final overthrow, and the congratulations in the Church—“*The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*”

agency, and the impossibility for Satan, in defiance of the Almighty's will, to release himself from his captive-bonds during the specified time, he is first “*laid hold of*,” then “*bound*,” next “*cast out*” into the “*abyss*,” and lastly, “*shut up*,” and his prison-doors “*sealed*” fast; that the fact may be known to all, that he is “*bruised*,” and mastered,* and prevented from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it;† to accuse “*the brethren*,” or harass “*the nations*” any more, or bring out the evil which is ever innate in the unregenerate heart of mankind in general—“*till the thousand years should be fulfilled*.”‡

4.—The enemy of Christ, the great deceiver of mankind, is thus seized, and securely lodged, by the strong arm of Omnipotence, within the confines of the “bottomless pit;” to be kept “in durance

* The prediction, as early as “*the fall*,” (Gen. iii. 15) of the bruising of the serpent's head by the “*woman's seed*,” is here well fulfilled. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

† Job i. 7, and ii. 2—Implying once a free permission, but under perfect control.

‡ It would be quite preposterous to suppose that the “*thousand years*,” here, are to be taken in the sense of “*a day for a year*,” for thereby we should make the period 360,000 years! It has previously been remarked, that where the inspired prophecy means *days* to be taken for *years*, the *year* (or its parts—months, weeks, &c.) is specified; never, when “*years*” are mentioned. See Jeremiah's prophecy of the captivity in Babylon for “*seventy years*” (literally); then, afterwards, Daniel's prophecy of “*seventy weeks*” (symbolically) = 490 years. (Jer. xxv. 11, 12; Dan. ix. 24.)

vile,” till loosed again for “a little season.” Meanwhile, the whole world is freed!—freed in every sense (1), from the usurper of Christ’s throne (2), from the pestilent breath of false teachers in the Church (3), from the foul slime and antagonism of the “old serpent.” Now comes the season of the triumph of the true Church, the full manifestation of the sons of God,* and of *Christ upon His throne*, His saints being as “kings and priests unto God” with Him.† Thus, in the glorious MILLENNIAL vision—immediately after and consequent upon the binding of “Satan”—THRONES are seen! The kingdom is come!—“*The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, is given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.*”‡ The saints now begin to “judge the world,” with Christ “THE KING” as their Head! A millennial reign without THE KING, is a fallacy and absurdity. As well might one expect morning or day without the presence of the sun. Christ, in Person, is the ETERNAL ORB around which “all rule, and all authority and power”§ must revolve, to which all must gravitate and be attracted. “*In the regeneration*”—said our Lord

* Rom. viii. 19. † Rev. i. 6, v. 10. ‡ Dan. vii. 27.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 25. Since the Gospel dispensation began, it is impossible to fix upon any period, shorter or longer, in which it could

to His disciples, referring to these millennial times, “*when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*”*

The crowning, presence, and enthronement of

be said, even in hyperbole, that it was like the millennium here predicted—Satan bound, saints enthroned, and Christ reigning. Taking the whole world into account, the very opposite to this has been the prevailing state of things. But all the faithful and wise of the Church of Christ in the earth have ever looked forward to the time, spoken of by the prophets, “*when the Lord alone should be exalted in that day,*” (Isa. ii. 11), when there should be “*One Lord, and His Name One,*” (Zech. xiv. 9). St. Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, and other writers of the first three or four centuries, all considered the millennium, in its plain and literal sense, as “*the thousand years of the kingdom,*” as “*the perfection of the works of God,*” as the time of “*the Son of God being conversant among men,* and their being ruled with most just government, and the resurrection of the saints, their possession of the kingdom, and reign in the New Jerusalem.” (See Bishop Newton, on Rev. 20.)

* Matt. xix. 28: This “*regeneration,*” or new-born happy state of the Church in the earth, is analogous to the “new birth” of the believer to righteousness, as by the Spirit of the Lord; of which it is said, “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: *old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.*” (1 Cor. v. 17.) Hence, the expressions “*new heavens and new earth,*” (2 Pet. iii. 13; Isa. lxv. 17,) show a complete renewal of *all creation*. This is called also (Acts iii. 21), “*The restitution of all things*”—from the fact (1) of *Israel’s Restoration*, at this period to their long lost inheritance of the Holy Land; (2) the restitution of *dominion over all the earth* to the rightful “*Second Adam,*” “*the Lord from heaven*” (1 Cor. xv. 45—49); (3) the recovery of heathen and Gentile “*kindreds, and people, and tongues*” to “the obedience of Christ,”

the King,* with the union in the kingdom of His faithful people, will have a wondrous effect over all creation. “*Judgment will then be given,*” in righteousness, and entrusted to *them*, who sit enthroned with Him. They will be His only accredited viceroys, the trusty vicegerents of the Divine law and will over all Churches and nations. The “*Judgment*” will maintain its predominance for good order and government, in Church and State, throughout the whole millennial period; while nations may still go on in their usual routine of civil government and ordinary intercourse—religiously, socially, and commercially;

(Ps. ii. 8); and (4) the *Paradisaic restoration* of peace and innocence, prosperity and happiness prevailing over all regions, and “in all places of Christ’s dominion.” See such Psalms as lxxvii., xcv., xcvi., xcvi., xcvi., &c., as bearing upon this subject.

* We need not assume that the constant, actual presence of Christ is necessary, even during the millennium; no more than it was needed during the forty days after His resurrection. The mention of the reign with Christ of His twelve chosen (Jewish) apostles must necessarily take our thoughts back to *Mount Zion and Jerusalem*, as the special place of the *visibility* of “the throne;” it being most probable, and also most consistent with many predictions to that effect. See, particularly, Luke i. 31, 32—the Angel’s announcement to Mary,—“*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.*”—The same fact is intimated in Isa. ii. 1–5, ix. 6, 7; 2 Sam. vii. 12; Amos ix. 11, 12; and numerous other prophecies.

but all will be placed under Christ and the sound principles of the Gospel. All will be conducted for the encouragement of industry and virtue, for the promotion of knowledge, art, and science, and for the prevention of everything hurtful and injurious; for the advancement of the full blessings of peace and harmony as connected with the “everlasting Gospel,” which is “GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN.”*

But the millennial glory would assuredly be incomplete without some visible testimony of Christ having taken away the “curse” caused by death, and of His “victory over the grave,” by His raising out of the dust those that had fallen asleep in Him; and especially all those who had given up their lives “for the word of God.” “*The souls*,”† therefore, or *persons* of martyrs,

* Luke ii. 14: We may reasonably assume that in the millennial triumphant reign will be fulfilled the prophecies which tell that “wars shall cease in all the world—“they shall not learn war any more”—“they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks”—The nature of wild and fierce animals shall be tamed—“the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid, the calf, young lion, and fatling together, and a little child shall lead them”—“they shall not hurt nor destroy”—“the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (See Isa. ii. 4, xi. 6—9, lxiii. 25; Habak. ii. 14.)

† “*Ψυχαι*,” “*souls*”—Some have imagined, that because the word “*souls*” is used here, and not persons, nor bodies, therefore the resurrection and enthronement, together with the

who had suffered death in the cause of the Gospel, *appear first* the most conspicuous objects upon their “*thrones*” of glory.* Their bodies in company with all that slept in Jesus were raised from the “dust of the earth” at Christ’s appearing; and all came down from the regions of “the air” with Him.†

Besides the martyrs actually “*beheaded,*” or otherwise put to death “*for the witness of Jesus,*”

millennial reign must not be literal, but spiritual—like a great revival of religion! But this would be doing great violence both to the meaning of words, and the glory of Christ! The word “*souls,*” we know, is over and over again, in Scripture, &c., used for *persons*. And here they are *risen souls*—saints with *resurrection bodies*, and therefore *spiritual beings*.

* These “*souls,*” it may be recollected, were, in the vision (Rev. vi. 9—11), seen as if “*under the altar,*” waiting for the *avenging of their blood*. And, it was said to them, that they must wait for the fulfilment of another number of “*fellow-servants*” of Christ, and of *brethren* who would be slain, as they were, for the truth’s sake and for “*the word of God.*” Hence, partly, the use of the word “*souls*” here, to take us back in memory to the era of martyrs—pagan, Papal, &c.—the fruitful era of the “*seed of the Church,*” and the obtaining of the “*better resurrection*” and *brighter crowns*; from the proto-martyr Abel, slain near the gates of the first Paradise, and Stephen, the first in the Christian age, stoned outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem—down to the latest in the professing Christian Church, such as “*the martyr of Erromanga*” (Rev. J. Williams), in the isles of the South Seas.

† There has been a distinction drawn, by careful writers, with regard to “the sign of the Son of man *in heaven,*” seen in startling events, and His actual *descending*, or *presence*, when *coming* in the clouds of heaven to the earth, “with

John sees among them all those “*which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.*” This includes all who, *like them*, were found faithful in holding the pure “word of God,” and bearing *witness* through “sufferings”—in fighting “the good fight of faith”—of the sincerity of their union and love to Christ, and detestation and avoidance of everything tending to make them yield to sin and error—as before described under the character and marks of antichrist*—or detract from the honour due to Christ alone. Of all such, it is expressly stated, “*they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*”

5.—“*The rest of the dead,*” meaning all those who could not be included in the numbers and characters above described; who were neither martyrs, nor confessors, nor among “the called, and chosen, and faithful” who patiently bore the cross and followed closely in the steps of the Lamb,† and all who died, as they had lived, in practical unbelief, impenitence, worldliness, and without change of heart—all these were left in

power and great glory.” The *raising of the righteous dead* seems to be the *first* act of His appearing; then, the changing (to resurrection bodies) of all the *righteous living*; and next, the whole assembled Church—risen and living saints, the Bride and her companions—coming down with the Bridegroom. (See Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; xxv. 31; Zech. xiv. 4, 5; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; Jude 14.)

* See, particularly, Rev. xiii. † Rev. xiv. 4, and xvii. 14.

their graves, as not fitted for the distinction, they "*lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*"* The *millennial* is positively affirmed and explained to John to be the period and consummation of "*the first resurrection*"†—the first great ingathering of "*the harvest,*" at the end of the age, before the final and general resurrection, at the close of the thousand years. This is "*the*

* "With what propriety," remarks Bp. Newton, "can it be said, that some of the dead who were beheaded, lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but 'the rest of the dead,' lived not again until the thousand years were finished, unless 'the dying' and 'living again' be the same in both places, a proper death and resurrection?"

† This explanation, expressly given to St. John by inspiration, ought to set aside—once, and for all—the ideal and spiritualizing exposition which some *uninspired* theorists have given of the nature of this *millennium*, the *resurrection* of believers, and the *reign of Christ*. If the "*first resurrection,*" here declared to be literal, be merely a resurrection of principles and a revival of the Gospel, what must we think of the second resurrection—"the rest of the dead"—spoken of at the end of this chapter? Of course, if the first is only *spiritual*, the second must be also only *spiritual*, according to every analogy of logical reasoning and deduction. Hence, the doctrine of bodily resurrection is done away with altogether, and the awkward dilemma follows, that there is here at the close of the last "revelation" of God's will to men, no mention of bodily resurrection, either of just or unjust, of righteous or wicked, and consequently no general judgment. We believe, on the other hand, with the plain record of Holy Scripture before us, that "*the first resurrection*" is literal, and "*the rest of the dead,*" means "*the dead, small and great, standing before God*" (ver. 11), as the next, or *general resurrection*. We do not discard, by this interpretation,

*better resurrection,** which the noble army of martyrs have ever coveted, and longed for, having willingly sacrificed their lives to obtain it. It is, also, that which St. Paul, who had perfect belief in the *general* resurrection was laudably ambitious to partake of, when he desires “*to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,*” and adding, “*if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*”†

6.—Well may the partakers of the “*first resurrection*” and privileged “*saints*” ruling with Christ throughout the millennial period of earth’s comparative felicity,‡ be pronounced “BLESSED

the fact of great spiritual light and progress, with the spread of the Gospel in all its fulness to the ends of the earth, *in and during the millennial reign*. The abuse of this doctrine, it may be added, by wild fanatics and enthusiasts, such as Fifth Monarchy Men, Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints, Irvingites, &c., is no argument against its solid, practical, and animating truth.

* See Heb. xi. 35.

† Phil. iii. 11.—Not “*αναστασις*,” the ordinary resurrection, but, “*εξαναστασις*,” the extraordinary, or distinguished “*first resurrection*” from among the dead. See the order of *resurrection* stated, 1 Cor. xv., 23, 24—“Christ the *first fruits* ;” afterwards, “*επειτα*,” “*they that are Christ’s at His coming* ;” then, *after the former*—“*cometh the end*.”

‡ It is a great mistake to think that the *millennial* is the *perfect* and final state of the earth’s bliss. It is the *intermediate* condition of its comparative bliss, between the present chequered dispensation and the eternal condition of undimmed glory. It cannot be *perfect*, while there is still death and the grave—though modified, among nations still “*in the flesh*.”

AND HOLY!" They are "*blessed*," in their enjoyments, and in the *security* of their happiness and glory for ever, and complete deliverance from every danger of falling away again, by the promise of God, that "they shall never perish."* They are "*holy*"—having been made so by the "*Holy Ghost*" *Himself*, and from following and delighting in that holiness of life "without which no man shall see the Lord." They cannot, therefore, be hurt by any power called the "*second death*," which is the *everlasting punishment of soul and body in hell*; for they are "*priests of God and of Christ*,"—of the Father and the Son—serving ever in His holy temple of creation, and reigning with Christ during the whole of the millennium, beholding His face, and being "*for ever with the Lord*."

May we contemplate this joyful millennial vision with unmingled delight! It is impossible to conceive or describe all the rapturous scenes which the brief figurative representation here before us may unfold to our view. Imagination might dwell long and linger wistfully on the entrancing subject, and be tempted to fill in the picture with many things not perhaps allowable with our present light. And even, when we had done all, we might only be made to feel the vanity of the

* John x. 38, 39.

attempt, and confess the extreme littleness of the conception; exclaiming, like the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, "I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me. Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."* So the apostle Paul; who, though he had been caught up to the "third heaven," yet is humble enough to affirm, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."† Only let us beware of joining in any thing ungodly, following any thing base or erroneous, bowing to any *false* religious system, or believing any "strange doctrines" of the day;

* 1 Kings x. 7. † 1 Cor. ii. 9; Isa. lxiv. 4.

The poetic talent of the Christian poet Cowper, before quoted (ver. 1), has been eloquent on the great "millennium" topic:—

"Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss. . . .
O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy!
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse recal'd:

lest we should be excluded from the honour and happiness of the approaching kingdom. Let us cultivate the true, heroic, "holy martyr"-spirit which shrinks from no duties because of pain or difficulties in the way; which is decisive in obedience to Christ; which follows the prophetic word; which clings to the necessary cross, "'mid evil report and good report;" which bears sufferings manfully, and performs services diligently; which "rejoices in the Lord" constantly, and looks forward, in the good hope of His coming, to that Rest "which remaineth;" believing, and not doubting, that all will be accomplished, in the fulness of time, and even more than was foreshown.

The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring.
 The garden fears no blight and needs no fence,
 For there are none to covet, all are full.
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,
 Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask, at noon,
 Together, or all gambol in the shade
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
 ONE SONG EMPLOYS ALL NATIONS, and all cry,
 ' *Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us.*'
 The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
 Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops,
 From distant mountains, catch the flying joy;
 Till, nation after nation, taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round!" &c.

— See Cowper's "Task:" Winter Walk.

“Need hath the GOLDEN CITY none,
Of nightly moon or noon-day sun;
And every pilgrim, waiting here,
Till down from heaven the LORD appear,
With this sure word may meet the night—
 *‘At evening time it shall be light!’**”

With dull despairing gaze beyond,
The world would bid my heart despond,
And cry, ‘Life endeth with the tomb,
And after glory comes the gloom!’
My soul, heed not the vain affright—
 ‘At evening time it shall be light!’

The deep dark shades may whelm the day,
And earth-born splendours melt away;
The night may lower, but not for one,
Whose life is hid beyond the sun;
My God shall make the darkness bright—
 ‘At evening time it shall be light!’

‘*It shall be light,*’ and all below
My soul believed in, then shall know,
Unclouded then mine eyes shall see
The heart of every mystery,
Its ‘length, and breadth, and depth, and height —
 ‘At evening time it shall be light!’”

‘*It shall be light!*’ when I behold
The BLESSED VISION long foretold!
The fondest hope, the sweetest grace,
My soul’s ‘BELOVED,’ face to face!—
Dear Lord, upon my longing sight,
 O bring the ‘evening,’ and ‘the light!’”

* Zech. xiv. 7.

REV. XX. 7—15.

END OF THE MILLENNIUM. — NECESSITY OF LOOSING SATAN.—“GOG AND MAGOG,” IN THE “FOUR QUARTERS.”—THE LAST ASSAULT AND OVERTHROW BY FIRE.—THE DEVIL CAST INTO THE BURNING LAKE.—THE GENERAL RESURRECTION, AND “GREAT WHITE THRONE” OF JUDGMENT.—DEATH AND HELL, JUDGED.—THE SECOND DEATH.—THE BOOK OF LIFE.

7.—And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. 8.—And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. 9.—And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10.—And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11.—And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. 12.—And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13.—And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. 14.—And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15.—And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

7.—The "golden age" is dimmed for a "little season ;" "*the thousand years are expired.*" The millennium was shown to be an intermediate or transition state, and not the full and perfected happiness of the earth and the glory of its inhabitants. "*Death*" was still undestroyed, though

human life was greatly prolonged.* “The *graves*” of “*hades*” were still ready for interments, though far less frequently opened than before. “*Nations and peoples*,” in great multitudes, still “in the flesh,” existed in “*the four quarters of the earth*,” mortal and liable to sin;† and distinct from “*the*

* This is shown in a beautiful passage of Isaiah (lxv. 17—25), which can refer to no other than the *millennial times* :

“Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth !
And the former shall not be remembered,
Nor come into mind !—
But, be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create !
For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
And her people a joy !—
And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people !
And the voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her,
Nor the voice of crying !
There shall be no more thence an infant of days,
Nor an old man that hath not filled his days !
For the child shall die an hundred years old,
But the sinner being an hundred years old shall be
accursed,” &c.

In another verse, (22), the prophet states—

“As the days of a tree are the days of my people”—
which must imply, that as “trees”—(“Cedars,” for instance, “of Lebanon,” and “oaks of Bashan”)—are known to live on through nine or ten centuries; so it is possible, that God’s people, even from among men “in the flesh,” may live, like Methuselah, a “thousand years” — *i. e.*, throughout the *millennium*.

† The “*Nations*” in the flesh—subject to Christ and His raised and immortal saints—had multitudes among them, no doubt, unchanged in heart, and therefore liable to sin. While Satan was bound and unable to tempt them, this sin was not

camp of the saints” and “the beloved city,” where Christ was in a special manner enthroned with the *risen* and glorified Church.

In order, as it would appear, (1) to make perfect Christ’s *great redeeming work*, not only for the restraint and *subdual* of sin and Satan, and their followers, in a *preliminary judgment*; but for their entire casting out and utter extinction from the *regenerated and redeemed world*; in order (2) to prove to all future ages and to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places” the *efficacy* of His single atonement for sin and his submitting to death, as the great vicarious sacrifice for sinners, of every class, for “*destroying him who had the power of death, even the devil*,” and *delivering them who through fear of death had been all their life time subject to bondage*; and, in order, (3), to “*sift the nations*” from everything like refuse, and show that nothing but the *genuine and new-born, really Spirit-taught “children of God”* can stand and abide the force of temptations. For some such reasons, it may be, and others, perchance,

much seen or known in open crime. They rendered outward homage to Christ, obeyed authority, and offered no opposition to “the King.” But, not seeking, and, therefore denied, the “*rain*” of God’s grace, and, perhaps, not *going up to Jerusalem* to see “the King,” who appears from festival to festival, in *His glory*, (as on the mount of “*transfiguration*,” (Matt. xvii. 1—9), they render themselves a ready prey to Satan, when He is (judicially) loosed again—to sift, and prove, and tempt them. (See Zech. xiv. 16—19.)

not known to us at present, there is a *moral necessity*, agreeable with all the purposes of Supreme wisdom and justice, that "*Satan should be loosed out of his prison.*"*

8.—He is "*loosed!*" His chains of sharp restraint are removed. His prison-doors of close custody are thrown wide open. The "seal" upon him is broken. The angel departs: and the tempter, now freed, loses no time in escaping. At once he goes forth, with the speed of lightning, to *deceive the nations and people*, and take captive such as only render a *feigned*, outward, insincere kind of obedience,† and not that of "*the heart and spirit,*" to the gentle rule of JESUS. The "*nations*" among which he finds ready work fitted to his hand, without any long process of persuasion, are said to be "*in the four quarters of the earth,*" that is, more or less, *throughout the whole world*; but particularly in quarters designated by the well-known and significant names of "*Gog and Magog.*"‡ The numbers of people found with

* See ver. 2, where the expressions "*must*" and "*for a little season,*" imply that it is the will and permission of a just and holy God; for purposes perfectly in accordance with all His Divine attributes and acts of wise and good government.

† See Ps. xviii. 43, 44. After Messiah's address to the Father, "*Thou hast made Me the head of the heathen;*" then, He adds, "*A people whom I have not known shall serve Me. As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me*" (or "*dissemble,*" as persons not rendering hearty obedience). See marginal reading to ver. 44.

‡ We may suppose that these names, "*Gog and Magog,*" which stand forth prominently in Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.—describing

“evil hearts of unbelief,” and only awaiting the presence of the tempter to bring out the lurking natural “*enmity*,”* disobedience, and rebelliousness within them, are described, when “gathered together” by Satan, as being like “the sand of the sea” in multitudes. Sad proof, alas! of the weakness of our poor fallen and mortal nature, even when most favoured with the highest possible advantages of an earthly and spiritual kind, and its inability, without grace, to stand its ground against Satan, or maintain true allegiance to the “LORD OF ALL,” though appearing and reigning on Mount Zion and before His ancients gloriously! †

ungodly nations and people, before the millennium, who came down “against the land of Israel,” and are destroyed by “overflowing rain and great hail stones, fire and brimstone,”—represent the unregenerate though subdued and outwardly obedient, classes scattered over the different regions of the globe, keeping at some distance from the influence of the “heavenly city, Jerusalem.” “Gog and Magog” have their special locality assigned to “the North parts,” and Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer,” &c., were with them. It is quite possible that Ezekiel’s prophecy against “Gog,” may partly reach beyond its first interpretation, to these post-millennial events, with a second and larger application. This, indeed, may be almost inferred from the words (Ezek. xxxviii. 8, 9), “After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years, . . . thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee.” Prophecy, not uncommonly, has this kind of first and second fulfilment; as, for instance (1), Assyrian “Babylon,” and (2), Romish “Babylon.”

* The “*enmity*” between the “serpent’s seed,” and the “woman’s seed,” has existed from the fall. (Gen. iii. 15; Eph. ii. 15, 16.)

† Isa. xxiv. 23.

May we not, also, gather from this, the indispensable truth, that *the world*, with all its highest pleasures and gratifications, cannot help to change the heart of man, nor save the soul from *declension to sin*; and that nothing but a heart renewed and taught by the Holy Spirit of God, can secure steadfastness, or preserve from falling, “in all time of temptation.”

9.—The combined enemies band together in one desperate compact of iniquity, defying the rule and authority of Christ. They “*come up together upon the breadth of the earth.*” They “*compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city,*”* “*the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*” How strange that they are not satisfied with the licence and indulgence of their passions, without proceeding to the extremity of open Satanic assault, upon the saints of God, and God Himself! Yet so it is; it is seen in the history of the human race, from first to last; when men of irreligion once give way to the vile “tempter,” he leads them on step by step, till, in the end, conscience becomes “*seared as with a hot iron*”—the eyes of the understanding become blind-folded; then they

* “*The beloved City.*”—A model of the millennial city and temple of the “Great King,” seems given (in Ezek. xl., &c.), where the site and proportions are marked out. The whole land, from Mount Hamath to the river of Egypt, is divided into twelve parts, parallel and equal. On Mount Hermon, 10,000 ft. above the sea, is supposed to be the site of the new temple, and

rush forward, without heart or head, and are ready to undertake the most desperate enterprise, urged wildly into the very jaws of their own destruction! The Almighty, in His just indignation, arises—requiring no armies now, set in long battle array against them. For, as He dealt with the wilfully rebellious Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their company,—“He makes the earth open wide her mouth, and swallow them up;” they go down quick into the pit; *the fire of heaven “closes upon them,”* and consumes them as in a moment!* They defile God’s blessed and sacred earth, with their presence and presumption, no more for ever!

10.—Now is the signal for the last and greatest act of all—the *general Judgment!*—the final dread assize, which terminates the very breath, sight, and sound of sin and suffering, Satan and death, in this creation of God’s redeemed but agitated world, which has lasted during the chequered history of seven thousand years!

The grand scene unfolds gradually to view. The “*Devil,*” as the primary and last potent deceiver

at the base, the city, covering an area of fifty miles square. (See Ps. xlviii. 1—8; also, “Approximations of Prophecy,” an interesting little work, by Major Scott Phillips.) The “city” is called “*beloved,*” because (1), none but God’s “*holy and beloved, called to be saints,*” are allowed to occupy it; and because (2), it is “the city of the great King,” the glorified “*Son of David*”—“דָּוִיד,” “*beloved*”—*the beloved for ever of the Father, “full of grace and truth.”* (Matt. iii. 17; John i. 14; Rom. i. 7.) * Numbers xvi. 31—35.

of the race of mankind, the determined traitor to God and the instigator of treason in others, is first consigned, without any process of trial, to his prepared and deserved abyss; where are found suitable associates and victims in all such as were allied with “*the beast and the false prophet*,” before punished by a similar and summary sentence.* There they are doomed to remain, under special infliction of continued punishment—“*tormented day and night, for ever and ever*.”

11.—The *Judgment*, called that of the “*great white throne*,” is now set. The “*throne*” is “*great*,” for it is exalted above all others; and “*white*,” as glowing “*like the fiery flame*,” and because of the pure and unsullied impartiality of infinite justice and equity of the Judge, “*the Ancient of days*.” The whole face of nature and creation seem

* Rev. xiv. 10, 11, and xix. 20.

† Whatever may be the nature of the penal “*torment*” here and elsewhere spoken of, or however long and endless it be, as the deserved doom of Satan and all the associated wicked and lost, it is no business of man’s to inquire into. “*Vain man would be wise*,” yea, wiser than God! Leave it to God’s infinite justice, truth, and holiness. “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” We ought to silence every doubt and suspicion of God’s infinite justice, and reconcile it with His perfect benevolence and wisdom, whether as to the *origin of sin*, or the *continued manifestation of Divine wrath respecting it*, with the inspired words of the patriarch Job, “*Shall mortal man be more wise than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*” (See Job iv. 17. Also, “*Some Remarks on the Eternity of Punishment*,” by the Rev. W. Cadman.)

eclipsed and vanishing from sight, before the incandescent brightness of this judgment-seat, and before the ineffable glory of Him who presides upon it, and who has "*thousand thousands*" of angels and saints "*ministering unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him.*"*

12.—The *general resurrection of the dead*, "*small and great*," next takes place. The "*dead in Christ*" had been raised before (ver. 4, 5), and the living righteous had been changed with "*resurrection*" bodies to meet them; each receiving their just and deserved place of reward, according to their faith and works, at the preliminary millennium-judgment of "*the day of the Lord.*" (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.) Now all besides, *who have ever lived upon earth*, all who were *not counted worthy of the first resurrection*, all who lived and died in sin, unbelief, and ungodliness, *up to the millennium*, all who died *during the millennial reign*, all who "*remained*" alive upon the earth, not having taken part with Satan at his last loosing—*all*, of every description and character, of every age and clime, "*small and great*," young and old, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, gentle and savage, compliant and untoward, believing and unbelieving—from East, West, North and South—Jew and Gentile, Christian and heathen†—ALL

* See Dan. vii. 9, 10.

† It is very evident that *the heathen*, to whom Christ had not been preached, would not be included in the Judgment-day

now, without exception, “*stand*” at the last great judgment-bar—raised from the dead and quickened in bodily form—before God the “*Judge of quick and dead.*” This Judge is “CHRIST JESUS,” the “*Son of God,*”—already present, ever since His second and pre-millennial advent, going and coming in and out, among His vicergerent saints and people upon earth.* “*To Him the Father “commits all judgment,” “that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father ;”*” because He is “*the Son of man,*” who “*knowing our frame, remembers that we are but dust,*” and can therefore make all reasonable allowance for us, as He can feel all congenial sympathy with us. This is the time and “*hour,*”

mentioned. (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.) How could they be charged with having done nothing for Christ, to whom Christ had never been fully preached and made known? That is the *prior* judgment of professing Christendom, at the “millennium” and the second advent of Christ. And we know that the preaching of the Gospel, *up to the “end” of the present* dispensation of Grace is “*for a witness.*” After the coming of “the day of the Lord,” “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. xi. 9.)

* There is no mention of any coming of Christ, figurative or otherwise, in, or during, or after the millennium (ch. xx.) But there is just a striking description introductory to it (ch. xix.) ; and we read of no positive departure of Christ after that announcement. Hence we must finally conclude, that the second and present advent of Christ is *pre-millennial*, and that He never again entirely withdraws, *in person*, from this *His earth*, though he may not, *uninterruptedly*, vouchsafe the “*beatific vision.*”

spoken of by our blessed Saviour—"The hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves* shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

"*The books are opened!*" The records of heaven are disclosed, containing the deeds done by man upon earth! No long written memorials are needed by the Divine mind, which apprehends, at a glance, all things present, past, and future, concerning the creatures of His care and government, throughout the universe.

"*All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" The memory of God, like any other attribute, is from everlasting to everlasting; unfailing, infallible, extending to all time, and embracing every, even the most minute event and circumstance. Things

* John v. 28, 29: Just before this, our Lord had said (ver. 25)—referring, without doubt, to the raising of the soul to spiritual life, and the members of His Church being quickened during the Gospel and prior to the millennial dispensation, in *body and soul*—"The hour is coming (for the body), and now is (for the soul), when the dead (in sin) shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The "*first resurrection*" (Rev. xx. 5) is also shown (in Dan. xii. 2) to be *distinct* from the *general resurrection of the day of final judgment, when all shall rise*;—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life—and some (left) to shame and everlasting contempt."

only thought of and planned in secret, or done and transacted in the dark, are all known by “Him,” “to whom all hearts are open,” and “from whom no secrets are hid.” Deeds, unseen by fellow-man, of good or of evil, are all made clear in *the light of that soul-searching eternal Countenance*, which nothing can escape, and of *that inscrutable Wisdom*, and *infinite Justice*, which fathoms and penetrates every depth. The criminal himself, of whatever class or degree of offence, arraigned before the splendour of that “white throne,” feels *conscience-stricken*; with all his sins and wrong-doings at once starting up in stern array of accusation against him—without need of other evidence—to pronounce him guilty and to affix his doom. Conscience accuses, convicts, condemns; and the “Judge” has only to pass the righteous, irrevocable sentence. “*The other book opened*,” which is said to be distinct from the former—is called and explained to be (like the one before mentioned,)* “*the book of life*.” This is no other,

* “*The book of life*,” or symbolic record in heaven of the names of all that partake of new spiritual *life in Christ*, and therefore are *saved*, has been alluded to before (ch. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8), and is so subsequently (ch. xxi. 27; also in Dan. xii. 1). The names being written in “*the book of life*,” implies a sentence of previous acquittal and acceptance in Christ. It is this *simple fact*, with regard to the righteous, which proves their election to salvation; and this is sealed and secured in their conversion, repentance, and “*new birth unto righteousness*.” The standing at the judgment-seat seems only required as a

than the figurative roll, or register of names, of the redeemed and saved; the heavenly token of God's remembrance of every single one of his believing, penitent, and, therefore, pardoned people. Their freedom from the *judgment and condemnation* was spiritually sealed, when they were united by faith to ^{the}their living Redeemer, and when that union was manifested by their "*walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;*" having been made free from the law and rule of sin which is "death," by accepting the law and rule of the Spirit, which is life eternal "in Christ Jesus."*

All are, finally, "*judged,*" and assigned their places of punishment or reward, and their degree in each state of heaven or hell, "*according to their works.*"† The inheritance of the redeemed is safe, after their once joining themselves heartily to the Lord, according to the terms of "*the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which is all their salvation, and all their desire.*"‡ But, as they

testimony of their *perfected salvation*; and as to the *degree of felicity and glory*, to be assigned them, higher or lower, brighter or more dim, according to the measure of faith, and nature of "*their works*" done in Christ's name, and for his people here on earth.

* Rom. viii. 1, 2.

† The judgment "*according to works,*" must be distinctly understood as not meaning that believers in Christ are accepted or saved "*by their works.*" No one can be saved "*by his own works, or deservings.*" Salvation is a "*gift*" of God's grace, through faith in Christ. The judgment is "*according to works,*" as *witnessing* to the degree of faithful service.

(Eph. ii. 8, 9.) ‡ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

are required to lead a holy and godly life, "*fruitful in every good word and work*," the measure of this fruitfulness and the nature of the "fruits" will be taken into the account, as to their place of honour and portion of felicity in the everlasting kingdom—the "*far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*," or otherwise—in the awards of the last great day. The judgment is not then to condemnation or acquittal; for this has already been decided according as they "*believed*," or not. But it is "*according to truth*," in the amount of the recompence; as "*believers*" have profited much or little, in the use of the talents and opportunities placed in their way; or have endured suffering, more or less, in the maintenance of their "*godly conversation*," or in self-denying labours patiently undergone for the good of the souls and bodies of their fellow-men. They who, in this respect, have been "*wise*" in effecting much good, shall, in life everlasting, "*shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who have turned many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever*."* He who knew

* See Dan. xii. 3; Matt. v. 19, xiii. 43; 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42; James v. 20.—Most of these passages show the high and distinguished blessing which will accrue to "*the righteous*," who have laid themselves out for others good, especially with reference to their religious and spiritual benefit. Matt. xxv. 31, &c., prove the judgment to be "*according to works*," as done (or not) in Christ's name, and especially in acts of kindness, temporal or spiritual, to the poor and needy "*brethren*" of His flock, for whom He died.

his Lord's will and did it not, will deservedly be beaten *with many stripes*. He who was faithful in little will have the fruition of much. He who had much, but was untrustworthy, will have a stricter account to render according to his greater responsibilities, and heavier damages to suffer according to the abuse of greater privileges.*

13.—Not one of earth's inhabitants, from Adam down to his latest posterity, is absent from this dread assize. Every "*body*" is found. Every one appears, in the proper fashion of his former fleshly tabernacle, however the corporeal form may have perished—drowned in the sea, devoured by fish, fowl, or beast, consumed by fire, wasted by old age, assailed by accident, or suffering from sickness and disease—buried in whatever graves, or dispersed to whatever winds—all are found again; all "return," and stand, in their proper recognized personality, "*before God*."† The invisible

* The parables of "*the pounds*" (Luke xix. 13), and of "*the talents*" (Matt. xxv. 15), are particularly designed to stimulate to a diligent use of *the means of grace*, and self-devoted exertion and sacrifice, in the exercise of our stewardship; and of those "*good things*" of this world which God has imparted very liberally to some, that they may dispense of their substance generously to the indigent and less favoured. In this respect, the standard of judgment is, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

† The *personal identity* of the living body, as to its leading outward lineaments, is a fact which we rejoice to believe, and which is sustained both by reason, and by the voice of revelation.

world of "*hades*"*—where the disembodied spirits were, some in Paradise and some in hell—all give up their dead, and all given up are judged and receive their deserved award, "*according to the works done in the body.*" All go to their own assigned and proper place.

14.—DEATH, the last enemy, is now no more! He is destroyed, who did destroy so many! His work on earth is done! *He is no more required*, in the new re-baptized earth; now cleared of the curse, of Satan himself, and of all the wicked of every class and degree. And as "*death*" has no more power to hurt, so "*hades*," or "*hell*," has no more power to receive victims. Both, therefore, are represented as "*cast into the lake of fire.*"

15.—*The "second death"*† is declared to be

The reality of the *recognition of friends in the world to come*, is a comforting doctrine, and one most generally received in the Church. It is confirmed by the appearances of our Saviour after His resurrection, and the assurance that the godly will be permitted to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and they shall see, "*face to face*," and "*know as they are known.*" (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

* "*Hades*," called "*the grave*," and "*hell*," is also known as the invisible local residence of disembodied spirits. (See p. 159.)

† "*Second death*" (see ver. 6, and Rev. xxi. 8). The "*first death*," we know, is the dissolution of the body and the departure of the soul to its appointed place. The "*second death*" is the condemnation of *soul and body* after this life, at the *last great Judgment-day*, when consigned to the doom of "*torment*;" out of which there is no escape known, and in which there is found no probationary "*place for repentance*"—

the last irreversible *penal* condition of all those who, while subject to bodily death and the *first* state of mortality here because of sin, repented not, nor believed in Jesus : and it is expressly shown, in conclusion, that this extreme penalty *cannot be incurred by any of the faithful*, but only by those whose names are deservedly excluded from the register of the redeemed, and from the infallible "*book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"*

O glorious gift of "IMMORTALITY" in bliss to be enjoyed in the presence of Christ, with the redeemed "multitude" out of all lands, and in the perfected fruition of the "*kingdom of heaven,*" for ever ! Who would *rebel* against such a hope, or refuse the prospect of such unbroken joy, in the restored and replenished Paradise of the heavenly "*mansions?*" The Lord, who once came in *lowliness* to suffer and bleed for us—let us be assured—will *come again in the greatness of His majesty*, to be exalted and to rejoice with His chosen, when His title will then be read, in one universal language—"JESUS, KING OF KINGS !" "*In that day,*" may we be among the number of those who

(see Eccles. ix. 10), and the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19—31). It may be added, that as the "*first death*" is not *extinction of existence*, neither can it be so inferred of the "*second death,*" as some vainly imagine.

* Rev. xiii. 8.

are permitted to *rejoice together with Him*; and not found in the ranks of the rebels whom Satan ever takes advantage of as his willing tools, and easy prey. Let us now draw nigh to the Father on the *mercy-seat, in this day of grace*, through *His sole meditation*—with all humbleness of mind, with heartiness of faith, and determination of earnest and diligent service. Then, shall our “*names*,” at the last, not be cast out as evil, but be found enrolled in the record of “the book of life.” Then shall our lot be among those who shall “awake” from the dust to be admitted to the “better resurrection!” Then shall “*death*,” and “*the grave*,” in whatever form they appear, be *conquered enemies*;* in the blessed hope and thankful assurance of rising to eternal life, and being translated to the skies, with the title and privilege, secured by Christ for us, beyond all others *precious*, of an “*entrance ministered abundantly into His everlasting kingdom*.”†

“O where shall REST be found,
 Rest for the weary soul?
 ’Twere vain the ocean’s depth to sound,
 Or pierce to either pole!
 The world can never give
 The bliss for which we sigh!—
 ’Tis not the whole of life to live,
 Nor all of death to die!

* 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. † 2 Peter i. 11.

"Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years,—
And all that life is Love!
'There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath!—
O what eternal horrors hang
Around "*the second death!*"

Lord God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun!
Lest we be banished from Thy face,
And evermore undone!
Here would we end our quest!—
Alone are found in THEE,
The life of PERFECT LOVE, the REST
Of IMMORTALITY!"

REV. XXI. 1—27.

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.—NO MORE SEA.—THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WITH MEN.—THE HOLY CITY.—THE PRESENCE OF GOD.—CESSATION OF SUFFERING, PAIN, AND DEATH.—THE PRIVILEGED INHABITANTS.—THE EXCLUDED.—THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCRIBED.—ITS APPEARANCE, WALLS, GATES, FOUNDATIONS.—SAVED NATIONS.

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. 2.—And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3.—And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4.—And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former

things are passed away. 5.—And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6.—And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7.—He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8.—But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. 9.—And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10.—And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11.—Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a

stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12.—And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13.—On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14.—And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15.—And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16.—And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17.—And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18.—And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* of pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19.—And the foundations of the walls of the city *were*

garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald; 20.—The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21.—And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22.—And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23.—And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. 24.—And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25.—And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26.—And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27.—And there shall in no wise

enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

1.—The *millennial* and transitional state is terminated; or rather gradually fades and glides, like a soft dissolving picture, into the perfect and purely *heavenly*. Everything that is carnal, corrupt, and merely earthly is dissipated. "*Satan*" is not only bound, but *cast out* for ever. "*Death*" is not only curbed, and less busy; but he is as one banished completely, and consigned to the regions of another clime, and another fiery element.*

Consequent upon this blessed first purification of the earth by "*fire*,"† and the extermination of

* Where "the lake of fire" (xx. 14, and xxi. 8) may be, or *what* it is intended to symbolize, we need not be curious to inquire. We must only be assured that God has *places of punishment* adapted for every offender, and for the destruction of every evil. In the wide range of His creation and free government, there necessarily exist *localities for penal correction, and for visible vindication* of His infringed laws, as well as for the exalted felicity of His loving and obedient children; and we know it will be our *happiness* if we secure his Fatherly favour, and our *own fault* if we incur His fiery displeasure.

† 2 Peter ii. 5—12. The "*fire*," which has been used to burn up the useless "*chaff*," and consume the dried "*tares*," introductory to the millennium (ch. xix.), may produce (together with Christ's *presence*) some of the great atmospheric and other

every element or particle of sin and its curse—all through Christ!—we see from John’s succeeding vision, the full development of the “*new heaven and the new earth!*” These were already partially observed during the millennial period.* But now they are perfectly revealed and manifested, in a new, pure and untainted atmosphere to breathe, and new heavenly habitations fitted for spiritualized beings, like risen, redeemed, and glorified saints to dwell in. There is “*no more sea,*” in this post-millennial state of the air, earth, and sky. The “waters of the sea,” ever dangerous to life, and ever emblematic of the toil and agitation of earth’s fallen creatures, are no more required. Transition by ships is no more wanted

changes necessary for the happy residence of the “*risen with Christ,*” who must occupy a prominent place in the earth during that dispensation. Many have thought that the above passage from St. Peter points to an extinction of all things in the world “*by fire!*” What a triumph that would be for Satan! But, on closely examining the language used by the apostle, it will be seen, that as the (atmospheric) “*heavens and the earth*” remained *after the deluge*, though said to “*perish by water;*” so they will remain in, and after, the *millennium*, though *perishing* or destroyed “*by fire.*” Persons forgetting or overlooking the frequent *two-fold fulfilment* of the same prophecy—one on a smaller, and the other on a larger scale—are liable to fall into much confusion and perplexity on the whole subject. “*The new heavens and the new earth,*” of the millennial state, (ch. xx.) are the *prior type* of the more extended and perfected state afterwards (ch. xxi.).

* Rev. xx. 11.

by angelic voyagers on wings of light. Every strip of land, clothed with its beauty of herb, plant, and tree, all bearing leaves, or flowers, or yielding fruits of exquisite kind as in the original Paradise,* is now used by the “*great multitude*” of the “new heaven and earth’s” inhabitants. There is no waste of watery deep; no waste and profitless ground.

2.—The blissful, imperishable community, is now represented before the eyes of John as “THE HOLY CITY, *New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*”† Of this there had been some view, on a diminished scale, before (xx. 9), where “*the camp of the saints,*” in the millennial “rest,” is styled “*the beloved city.*” But now the numbers of the chosen citizens are all complete. The bride “elect,” of Christ’s true Church, has now all her companions with her. Not one is wanting. She appears, here, in all the beauty of holiness, in all the elegance of grace, and with all the chaste adornments that become “the Lamb’s Wife.”

3, 4.—God’s “*tabernacle and dwelling*”‡ are pronounced by “*a great voice out of heaven*” to be

* Gen. i. 29.

† See ver. 9, 10, 18—20: also, before, iii. 12, xix. 7, 8.

‡ The type of the eternal presence of Jehovah with His people is given in the (Shekinah of the) “*tabernacle*” and “*temple*” of the Jewish dispensation. See Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; 1 Kings viii. 10, 27; Ezek. xliii. 7, &c.

henceforward *permanently fixed among men*; without the least danger of disturbance by suffering, or the slightest cause for interruption by sin. Sin and suffering,—“*the former things*,”—are “passed away.” They are dispersed to the winds of forgetfulness. God’s people, with whom He ever is, cannot fall into sin, for they cannot be tempted. They cannot suffer, because they know no sin and have no sin in them; and “*God Himself*” is constantly with them to be their Father-King, their only acknowledged Lord and Preserver. He engages to keep them, by His covenant of life and peace for evermore, from all cause of “*tears*”—as if He wiped them away with his own hands,*—from all pain and sorrow, from all sickness and death!

5.—*Every thing is “made new!”* It is declared to be made so by Him who “*sitteth upon the throne*” of the universe! The announcement is worthy of the proclaiming “*voice*” of JEHOVAH Himself! It is commanded to be *written down* at once by His servant John, for the edification and comfort of the “*militant*” Church, as “*the words*” of Him, who “FAITHFUL and TRUE,” cannot belie HIMSELF.

6, 7.—“*It is done!*”† All is fulfilled, as it was Divinely ordered and purposed. The same Jesus who describes himself, at the opening of the

* See ch. vii. 17; also, Isa. xxv. 8.

† See ch. xvi. 17; Luke xxiv. 44.

Apocalypse, the "*Alpha and Omega*," the "*Beginning and the End*,"* declares Himself now to be the speaker to John of these things—an additional testimony of His Godhead, and of His unfailing concern and living interest, from first to last, in the grand work of man's *redemption, regeneration, and salvation* !

The promise is next repeated by the same Divine Saviour, who once spake so lovingly and invitingly on earth to those living under the Gospel dispensation in a probationary state ; † that *whosoever* shall come in prayer and faith to Him—as one "*athirst*" for the streams of living water—for instruction in the doctrines that pertain to life and godliness, shall be allowed to "*drink of the fountain of the water of life freely* ;" and that *whosoever* shall persevere in the same, resisting sin, and *overcome* to the end, ‡ shall "*inherit all the things*" here mentioned, concerning the glorious heaven upon earth—Christ will be ever with him as "*his God*," and he shall be with Christ, as "*His son*," *through all eternity*.

8.—After this *rich promise* to the willing, patient, and obedient "*followers of God as dear children*," there is a *merited punishment* denounced

* Rev. i. 8—11, 17, 18, xi. 17, xvi. 5 ; compare Rev. xxii. 13.

† John iv. 13, 14, vii. 37, 38.

‡ The covenant promise of adoption and "sonship" is frequent in the Scriptures. See 2 Sam. vii. 14 ; Ps. lxxxix. 26—29 ; Isa. lvi. 5 ; John i. 12, 13, &c., &c.

against all who disobey, and who are of a quite contrary character. The marks of this disobedience and perverseness in sin and wickedness are clearly defined, both here and in the closing pages* of the "*revelation of Jesus Christ*;" to place the last *indelible stamp of reprobation* upon all who are included in the sad catalogue, and to warn the world of the danger imminent, from this punishment of wickedness and vice, in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," which is the "*second death*."

The various characters, who are to be for ever excluded from the "holy city" are thus described; (1), *the fearful*, the timid and distrustful, and all who, out of fear of man, or shame, "fall away," or are undecided before God;† (2), "*the unbelieving*," all who are *infidel*, or living *without God, and without faith in Christ*; (3), *the abominable*, the openly vicious, flagrantly criminal, and odiously offensive to God for want of "true religion and virtue;" (4), "*murderers*," the unmerciful, fierce, and without natural affection; (5), "*whoremongers*," the unholy, "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" (6), "*sorcerers*," those who hold doctrines of "demons," and have converse with familiar spirits; (7), "*idolaters*"—all who

* See Rev. xxii. 11, 15.

† Luke xii. 4—9: "*fearful*," in contrast with the righteous and faithful who have "*απειρη*," moral courage on God's side, and therefore "overcome." See 2 Peter i. 5, &c.

serve the creature more than the Creator, who make to themselves *images*, bow down to them, or worship them; (8), "*all liars*," who neither act the truth, nor speak it, showing a deceitful and treacherous heart and conduct.* May "the glass" here held up for each one to look into be of practical service! We would say, whoever sees himself here in any form delineated—under either of these heads—let him at once determine, in God's strength, to rise in time out of this extremely perilous condition, flee with all speed to Christ, and so "escape the wrath to come." The hand of mercy will be gladly held out to him, while the day of grace is not gone by.

9.—The view and description of the "GREAT CITY," the "HOLY JERUSALEM," which before had only been drawn and given in faint outline,† are now specially presented to John, "the beloved disciple," and to the Church, through him, by one of the "*seven*" chosen angels, "*which had the seven vials*," before mentioned.‡ "*Come hither*," he says, "*and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife!*"

* See Rom. i. 16—32; Gal. v. 19—21; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; 2 Tim. iii. 1—5, where most of these "condemning" sins are referred to.

† See Rev. xix. 6—9; xx. 4, 6, 9; xxi. 2, 3, 4.

‡ Rev. xv. 1, 6, 7; xvi. 17. One of these angels, perhaps the "seventh," may have been selected, as the last who had been present on the scene before the millennial glory, or as one who had been commissioned from heaven for the work of wrath and destruction upon the (Roman) offending earth; and now he would

10.—Upon this, he seemed carried away by the angel “in the spirit,”* to the lofty eminence of some “*great and high mountain*,” from whence “the city,” with its *Bridal* inhabitants, is observed, as in a picture, “*coming down out of heaven from God!*”†

11.—The GREAT CITY is seen, transparent with “*the glory of God!*” The “*light*” beaming in it is “*clear as crystal*,” and like “*the most precious*

show *the great contrast*, in the work of mercy and salvation for all those who lovingly obey and follow the “Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ,” belonging to “*the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*.”

* Rev. i. 10; xvii. 3.

† The “*holy city*”—“*the heavenly Jerusalem*,” the symbolized residence of “*the Bride*,” and all that are holy and belong to Christ—has been referred to, by prophets and apostles, in terms of rapturous hope and promise for all the men “*of faith*”—as, “*the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*,” as the “*better country, even the heavenly*,” as prepared for the faithful by God Himself; “*the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*,” to which all come, in privilege and spiritual citizenship, as soon as they really believe in Christ.—(Heb. xi. 10, 16; xii. 22.) The “Jerusalem above which is free, and is the mother of all” who believe (Gal. iv. 26), is apostrophized thus by Isaiah (lii. 1, &c.)—

“Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion,
Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem !

THE HOLY CITY !

For henceforth there shall no more come unto thee
The uncircumcised and the unclean !”

The “*Bride adorned*”—the true Church of the redeemed in glory—is also referred to Isa. v. 4, 5; lxi. 10; Ps. xlv. 13, 14; Cant. i. 4; Matt. xxv. 1, &c.; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25—32.

jasper stone!"—even from Him who is LIGHT itself!*

12.—Its "*wall is great and high,*"† reaching far heavenwards, not for defence, but to magnify God's saving strength and protection around His people. Its "*gates*" are *twelve* in number, significant, it may be, of the "*twelve apostles*" of our blessed Lord, sustaining and conserving the true doctrines of the Gospel, like "*twelve angels,*" with "*names,*" designating "*twelve tribes,*" or sound Churches and denominations of "*the children*" of God's chosen "*Israel.*"‡

13.—These "*twelve gates*"§ are seen, by John, equally distributed on each of the four sides of the holy city; showing, that the "*holy Jerusalem*" is uniform and perfect in all its proportions, like a *city that is compact and in unity with itself,*|| where there are no divisions, irregularities, or jealousies; affording free access to all, and composed of happy "*citizens*" from all "*quarters*" of the world.

* John i. 9; viii. 12; ix. 5; 1 John i. 5, 7.

† Ps. xii. 5—7; Isa. xxvi. 1; lx. 18; Zech. ii. 5.

‡ See the *sealing vision*, Rev. vii. 1—8. The "*twelve angels,*" one at each gate, may represent the "*angels,*" or presiding bishops and ministers of the Church of Christ (ch. i. 20), appearing to watch over the spiritual welfare of the heavenly fold; or, they may signify the presence, companionship, and friendly guardianship of "*ministering spirits of God,*" as adding to the glory and happiness of the redeemed for ever.

§ See Ezek. xlvi. 31—34.

|| Ps. cxxii. 3—5; Eph. ii. 18—22.

14.—The “*foundations of the wall*” are also “*twelve*,” in harmony with the number of the gates before described; and, in distinct recognition of the “*apostles of the Lamb*,” demonstrating that they who are privileged residents of the “*city*” are such only as have been “*built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets*,” with Jesus Christ Himself as the “*chief corner Stone*.”*

15--18.—The angel who described these things to John, appeared to have a golden “*measuring rod*,” to make the dimensions of “*the city*” visibly and intelligibly *accurate* to him; in its being “*four-square*,” and quite *equal* in “*length, and height, and breadth*,” representing a space of

* Eph. ii. 20. Every thing, in this description, tends to uplift the mind to the glory of the Church of God, in its heavenly and perfect state, as it was foreshadowed in the “*Zion*” of the *earthly Jerusalem*. So sang the prophetic psalmist—

“His foundation is in the holy mountains!

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion,

More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou City of God!”—

“When the Lord shall build up Zion,

He shall appear in His glory!”

Ps. lxxxvii. 1—3; cii. 16.

Also, the prophet Isaiah—

“The Lord hath founded Zion!

And the poor of His people shall trust in it.....

They shall call thee, THE CITY OF THE LORD,

The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.....

Thou shalt call thy walls SALVATION, and thy gates PRAISE!”

Isa. xiv. 32; lx. 14, 18.

"*twelve thousand furlongs*,"* towering aloft in magnificence, and comprehending room sufficient for a large and united people; its "*wall*" rising "*an hundred and forty-four cubits*" high, which, according to the angel's measuring, like that used by "*man*,"† is sufficiently high for observing its symmetrical proportions, for attraction, not for defence; the structure of the wall being of brilliant "*jasper*," and the whole city being built with "*pure gold*," and "*clear*" as transparent "*glass*."‡

19—21.—The "*twelve foundations*" of the city-wall are "*garnished*," or decorated, "*with all manner of precious stones*;" and "*the gates*," likewise, are "*twelve pearls*!" Everything connected with the *glorious city* is composed of the most

* Reckoning eight of these "*furlongs*" to the mile, this would be, in all, "*fifteen hundred miles*;" which makes the extent of each side 375 miles. Of course we are not speaking altogether of a real, but a symbolic city, in terms of ineffable light, unity, beauty, grandeur, and comprehensiveness.

† The "*cubit*," as man's measure, from the *elbow* (which the word signifies) to the forefinger, is generally calculated as eighteen inches. This will make the height of the wall 216 ft.

‡ See ver. 11—21, also Rev. iv. 3; Prov. viii. 19, 10; Isa. liv. 11, 12; Eph. iii. 8; 1 Peter i. 7. The frequent mention of "*jasper*," "*gold*," "*transparent glass*," &c., points to figures denoting the super-excellence and preciousness of the celestial state, the supreme happiness and complete salvation of God's people, as well as the extreme beauty and transparency of doctrine and character which become "*saints*," and through which they attain and are "*made meet*" for the heavenly "*inheritance*."

costly materials, of “*pure gold*,” and beautiful objects with which the experience of man is conversant in creation. The repetition, in some form or other, of the number “*twelve*,” in the construction of the *foundations*, “*the gates*” having guardian “*angels*,” with the “*names of the tribes*,” the extent of “*the city*,” and “*the wall*,”—may seem to remind us, throughout, of “*the twelve apostles of the Lamb*” (ver. 14), and the pure doctrines of the “*everlasting Gospel*,” which they taught. And as the twelve different *precious stones* of the “*foundations*” — “*jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasmus, jacinth, amethyst*” *—vary in some peculiarity, in greater or less degree of durability, lustre and value; so, we may conceive, are “*the diversities of gifts*,” but one “*and the same spirit*,” † which characterize the whole “*household of God*”—ministers and citizens of “*the Holy Jerusalem*”—all cemented together in one grand apostolic communion and fellowship under the “*ONE LORD* ;” in whom all the building, fitly framed together; groweth into a holy temple—an habitation of God through the Spirit. ‡

* The different nature and value of these “*precious stones*” may be ascertained by consulting any good Biblical Cyclopaedia. We may observe, on the moral and spiritual significance of this enumeration, what varieties of talent, disposition, thought, will, expression, energy, action, are found even in the apostles of our Lord, as well as in the best divines and champions of the faith of Christ, and Christians in general!

† 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. ‡ Eph. ii. 22; Isa. liv. 11, 12.

22, 23.—There is seen “*no temple*,” in the representation of the *glorified city*. He, who “*filleteth heaven and earth*,” requires no material temple, made with hands, for the indwelling of His presence with His holy, adoring, and loving people.* The children of men, in their fleshly weakness, have need of “*temples*” of a material kind, wherein to meet and worship God, and prepare for His actual presence in the eternal city above; and, here, by His Spirit, He vouchsafes His presence where only “*two or three*” faithful children are gathered together in His name, and commemorate the great mystery of redemption. Christ also promises, by the “*Holy Ghost*” to make a “*temple*” for Himself in all believing hearts—to “*dwell*” in them, and “*walk*” in them, and inspire within them “*the hope of glory*.”† But, in the perfect vision of His actual presence in the heavenly city, where “*we shall see Him as He is*,” there needs no special temple to His praise, or shrine for His worship! The whole “*city*” is essentially the light and “*glory of God*!”‡ “*The Lord God Almighty and the*

* Acts xvii. 24, 25; Isa. lxvi. 1. † 2 Cor. vi. 16; Col. i. 27.

‡ See Isa. lx. 19: The whole chapter is full of the millennial glory of the restored and “*heavenly Jerusalem*”; where it is said of her:—

“The Lord shall arise upon thee!

And His glory shall be seen upon thee!

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,

And kings to the brightness of thy rising”—

Lamb”* constitute, by their presence, the best “temple” of His people! And as there is no material visible structure required for worship, so there is no need of the shining daily sun or nightly moon; whose feeble and inferior rays, useful in other parts, are not seen here, being eclipsed in the brighter empyrean splendour of the beams of the “Sun of Righteousness,” and of the “Father of Lights”—the unclouded eternal light and blessing of all the “saved!”†

24—26.—The “saved” of all nations‡ rejoice and “walk in the light” of the heavenly city. “Kings” with their subjects bow before it, and bring willingly their honour and their homage

“They shall call thee THE CITY OF THE LORD,
The Zion of the HOLY ONE of Israel!—

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day,

Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee!

But the LORD shall be unto thee an EVERLASTING LIGHT!

And THY GOD THY GLORY!”

* The mention here of “*the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb*,” and “*the throne of God, and of the Lamb*” (ch. xxii. 1), and there being “no temple” in this last and perfect “city,” show that the city and temple of Ezekiel (ch. xl. &c.) are past, and the post-millennial kingdom is now come. *The Father and the Son* are specially present, in full united blaze of light and glory. “*The Lamb*” never ceases to be the light of His people! (See note, p. 545.) † James i. 17.

‡ The “nations” may have been gathered from those who were alive on the earth, and were faithful to “*the King*” at the last “loosing of Satan,” and, probably, united with the “*risen*” subjects not included among “*the children*” and “Bride” of Christ.

unto it! No space or distance can impede them; no enemy can hinder them; no tempter deceive or prevail against them! All is peace, because all is purity! All is harmony, because all is brotherly unity! All is happiness, because all is holiness! All is heaven upon earth, in the absence of sin and death! To them, and to all its blissful possessors, who bring the glory and honour of the nations into it, the gates of the glorious privileged city stand wide open, and that *perpetually*. No darkness, or danger of night, calls for their closing. No hostile force by day dare venture to attack them. There is no bar to spiritualized being. Space is annihilated; freedom perfect.*

27.—The sentence and terms of *exclusion* from the confines of the heavenly abode, has gone forth by an eternal decree, which cannot be transgressed or broken; that *no one can in any wise be permitted to enter among the "saved," or allowed to come within the bounds of the sacred city who has the least taint of defilement in his nature, disposition, or character—no one that is inclined to commit any abominable or offensive deed, in the sight of God, or His people—no one that is prone to invent or utter a falsehood or lie—no one, except those before mentioned, who are*

* We may conceive of the "resurrection" spiritual body of the redeemed, in the consummated glory that, like our Saviour's body, it can pass from sphere to sphere, appear and disappear, come and go without let or hindrance.

written, enrolled, and approved, “in the LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE!”*

With all such fulness and richness of Divine colouring is the FELICITY in store for the chosen and faithful in Christ Jesus, here set before us! Surely we ought to need no higher or brighter attraction, to make us long for a portion in the heavenly “city,” desire “*the better country, even the heavenly,*” and determine, with God’s grace, to become at once earnest pilgrims Zion-ward, in order to be fitted for this supremely blessed “*inheritance among the saints in light,*” and escape the doom of exclusion.

What are the paltry and fading things of the world, time and sense, amid these terrestrial mortal scenes, compared with the substantial and

* The repeated mention of being found enrolled in the Lamb’s book of life, as the final test of “*meetness for the blessed inheritance,*” may properly be said to remind us—even to the end—that none but *true Christians*, who have given their hearts to the Lord and built their faith firmly on Christ, the Rock of ages, *relying on the efficacy of His all-precious Atonement to cleanse from every sin*, legally and practically, can be considered as “*made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*” (See Titus iii. 4—7.) Whatever may be the condition hereafter of those who have never had the opportunity of hearing of Christ so as to receive or reject the offered mercy, we may be assured of this, that their judgment will be “according to truth” and the light of nature and conscience; but their allotted portion cannot be in the “*holy city*” of the redeemed—it cannot be among those “*written in the Lamb’s book of life,*” or even among “*the nations of the (believing and) saved.*” But, “*shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (Gen. xviii. 25.)

enduring transcendent glory of the celestial city?
Truly, we may feel, even now, and say—

“Fading are the worldling’s treasures,
All his boasted pomp and show!
Solid joys and lasting pleasures,
None but Zion’s children know!”

Yet what multitudes, in the face of these promises from the glad tidings of the blessed Gospel—in defiance alike of warnings and invitations, threatenings and exhortations, punishments and rewards, ignominy and glory—still rush onward along the “*broad way that leadeth to destruction,*” in hatred of God and contempt of His word, in determined opposition, neglect, and unbelief; “*refusing to hear the voice of the charmer,*” or to listen either to the thrill of terrible judgment or to the voice of love and entreating mercy. Do not such resemble the reckless “*Gallio,*” who “*cared for none of these things,*”* or the blind and deluded citizens in the parable, exclaiming, “*We will not have this man to reign over us?*”†

But let us awake to the vast importance of “*the HOPE set before us;*” the unspeakable value of the prize and crown of glory for eternity! Let us lay fast hold of the promise, using all the present means of grace and religious opportunities for its attainment, with all diligence and dutifulness;

* Acts xviii. 17.

† See the parable of “*the kingdom, and the ten pounds.*” Luke xix. 14.

with all piety and charity ; with all proper dread of the consequences of falling short, but with all laudable ambition and zeal ; with unfailing faith, unfaltering step, and ever-cheering hope of having a place, *through “the blood of the Lamb,”* prepared for us among the “*many mansions*” in our heavenly “*Father’s house*,” according to the word of Christ*—a place and a name “*better than of sons and of daughters*”—

In the “HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM !”

“JERUSALEM the golden !

With “milk and honey” blest ;

Beneath thy contemplation

Sink heart and soul oppress’d !

I know not, oh ! I know not,

What social joys are there ;

What radiancy of GLORY,

What LIGHT beyond compare !

They stand, those “walls” of Zion,

All jubilant with song !

And bright with many an “angel,”

And all the “martyr-” throng !

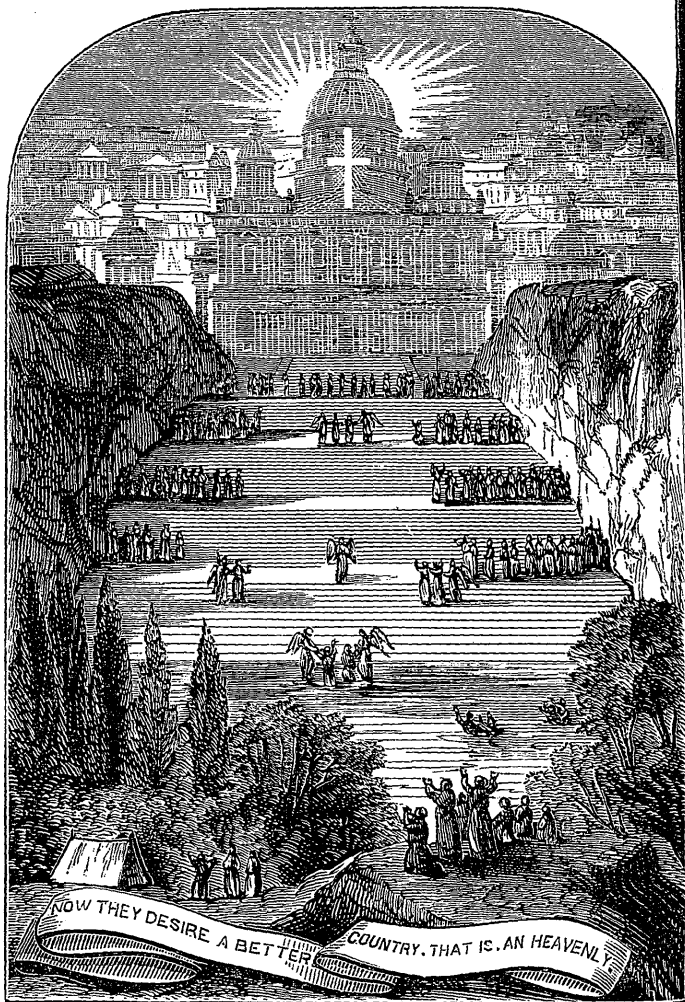
The PRINCE is ever with them ;

The daylight is serene ;

The “pastures” of the “BLESSED,”

Are decked in glorious sheen !

* John xiv. 1, 2.



"There is the "THRONE of DAVID,"—
And there, from care releas'd,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast!
And they who, with their "LEADER,"
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of "white!"

JERUSALEM THE GLORIOUS—
The glory of the "elect;"
O dear and future vision,
'That eager hearts expect!
E'en now by faith I see thee;
E'en here thy "walls" discern!
To thee my thoughts are kindled,—
And strive, and pant, and yearn!"*

* See allegorical View of pilgrims going up to the heavenly city—with motto from Heb. xi. 16.

REV. XXII. 1—21.

RIVER AND TREE OF LIFE.—NO MORE CURSE.—
GOD'S SERVANTS SEE HIS FACE.—NO NIGHT.—
EVERLASTING REIGN!—END OF THE PROPHECY.
—CHRIST COMES QUICKLY.—NO WORSHIP OF
ANGELS.—TIME AT HAND.—NO MORE CONVER-
SIONS, NOR CHANGE AFTER DEATH.—THE BLES-
SED.—THE EXCLUDED.—THE INVITATION FROM
THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE.—THE THIRSTING
MUST COME AT ONCE.—THE "GRACE" TO ALL
WHO COME.

AND he showed me a pure river of
water of life, clear as crystal, pro-
ceeding out of the throne of God and of
the Lamb. 2.—In the midst of the street
of it, and on either side of the river, *was*
there the tree of life, which bare twelve
manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every
month : and the leaves of the tree *were* for
the healing of the nations. 3.—And there
shall be no more curse : but the throne of
God and of the Lamb shall be in it ; and
his servants shall serve him : 4.—And
they shall see his face ; and his name *shall*
be in their foreheads. 5.—And there shall
be no night there ; and they need no

candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light : and they shall reign for ever and ever. 6.—And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7.—Behold, I come quickly : blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8.—And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. 9.—Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not : for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God. 10.—And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. 11.—He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12.—And, behold, I come quickly ; and my reward *is* with me, to give every

man according as his work shall be. 13.—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14.—Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15.—For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16.—I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star. 17.—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18.—For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19.—And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the

things which are written in this book. 20.—He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

1.—The “New Jerusalem,” the happy and “eternal city,”* the abode of the blessed and redeemed, is still before the eyes of the entranced prophet. He is shown there by the angel, “*a pure river of water of life.*”† It is “*clear as crystal*”—transparent, and without a particle of discolouring or defilement. No impurity of any kind, or in any degree, is permitted within the new “Paradise,” the “heaven upon earth” of the ransomed family of God. Every thing tells of the filling up of what was failing and wanting in the first Paradise—the “Eden” of delight, the place of man’s primeval innocence. All is now fully *regained* in its richness of bliss, without the danger of a tempter, or any

* What a presumptuous *misnomer* assumed by Rome, calling herself by the name of “*the eternal city*!”—robbing God of that proper honour due only to the “*heavenly Jerusalem*,” to be revealed hereafter in glory!

† Ps. xlv. 4. A pure “*river, whose streams make glad the city of God,*” is a type of the sanctifying power of the holy Spirit, whose gracious influences are from the Father and the Son, just as these waters seem to flow from “*the throne of God and of the Lamb.*” This “*river*” of the water of life is also a token of immortality to all who are among the saved.

of the necessary restrictions of the probationary state of God's creatures.* And, as “*the waters*” of a gentle limpid stream, form, in eastern pictures, an image cool and refreshing, as they glide on within the precincts of a lordly palace; so, the “waters” of the “*river of life*” are seen in the sublime picture of the palace of the Great King, “*proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,*” from whom, and through whom alone, to fallen, but restored mankind, “*all good things do come,*” “*all blessings flow.*”

2.—*In the midst of the street of the golden city,* and planted on either side of the sacred life-giving “*river,*” is the ever fruitful, and health-bestowing “*tree of life;*” bearing all kinds of fruit, and these every month, well suited to each season, and to gratify every taste; having also its fair and verdant “*leaves*” most useful for salutary purposes; never withering; ever beauteous to behold; ministering some good service† continually, to “*the nations of them which are saved.*”‡

* Every rational creature, from the first, exists only by obedience to God.

† Ps. i. 3; Isa. xlv. 3—5; Jer. xvii. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 12—“*Bearing twelve (manner of) fruits,*” literally, “*ποικύν καρπὸν δωδεκά*”—“*twelve fruits*”—and “*month by month*”—while the “*leaves*” continuing all the year, and ever green, dispense their service (“*θεραπεύειαν*”) to the “*saved,*” but subject nations; signifying, doubtless, among other things, that the privileges of the latter, are somewhat inferior, compared with those enjoyed by “*the children of God*” in the holy city; even as “*leaves*” are inferior to “*fruits.*”

‡ See Rev. xxi. 24.

3, 4.—The “*curse*” is no more. Earth’s “*thorns and thistles*,”* the blight and barrenness from sin—which had been much relieved during the millennial reign—are now gone for ever, with the final banishment of Satan, and the cessation of “*death*.” There is *no more toil* for the sons and daughters of men ; no more eating bread “*in the sweat of the face*.” Flowers of every hue, “*pleasant to the eye*,” grow and bloom without culture ; and none is doomed to “blush unseen,” or—

“Waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

Luscious “fruits of the earth” abound (ver. 2), all “good for food,” from the rich and spontaneous produce of the genial soil. Balmy fragrance breathes all around, wafted on the wings of every zephyr. Each verdant landscape smiles with the plenteous “herb for the service of cattle” and beasts of the field. These now gather round man (instead of fleeing from him), *without restraint or fear*. They sport together, all tame with playfulness, contributing to the innocent enjoyments of the heirs of bliss. To contemplate the “*great Creator*” in the endless glory of His “*handiwork*,” and, “*look through nature up to nature’s God*”—exploring height and depth—the firmament and heavens above, and things below, and things under the earth†—seem well to constitute

* Gen. iii. 17, 18.

† The various subjects of *science*, which laudably interest philosophic minds, but which are, of necessity, very imperfectly

some of the blissful occupations of the “redeemed” of God, in the immortal state, of all who are privileged to “see *His face*,”* and bear “*His name in their foreheads*”†—occupations worthy of “the servants of God” perpetually, when “the curse” of sin is gone from the world, and the “throne of God and of the Lamb” is fixed with undisputed SOVEREIGNTY and power in the “holy city,” everlastingly!

5.—The closing prophetic portion of the “Apocalypse” reveals to us, in this verse, the fact that, in the heavenly condition, there will be no such thing known or felt, as “darkness.” All will be “light!”—and that, unbroken even by the recurrence of any night; for God Himself, WHO “IS LIGHT,”‡ will

known and discovered in the present state, will, *with the removal of “the curse,”* admit of full and free scope for endless inquiry and most delightful and boundless investigation. The varied beauties upon the earth’s surface, in animal and vegetable life—such as in *botany, zoology, &c.*; the wonders beneath the surface, and within the bowels of the earth—in *geology, mineralogy, &c.*; the glories of the heavens above in *astronomy* and the knowledge of planets, stars, comets, meteors, with the varieties of atmospheric phenomena—will surely afford good exercise for the highest order of sanctified intellect in the “*life eternal*” that is coming.

* The seeing God, “*face to face*”—which was not permitted to men in the flesh, mortal and sinful—will form great part of the felicity of perfect and immortal spirits. Job xix. 27; Ps. xvii. 5; Matt. v. 8; John xvii. 14; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2.

† Rev. iii. 12; xiv. 1.

‡ 1 John i. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 16. “Light” is evidently a property independent of the sun, moon, &c., which are only “light

be there with "His servants, and *they shall reign for ever and ever!*"* The darkness will then really be past! The "true light" will then shine!* Now, we cannot separate the idea and representation of darkness from the effects of sin, and the gloom of "the valley of the shadow of death." But holy, sacred, cloudless, nightless light, now beams on every eye! The very "eye," that was here all along *denied* "*the light*" of day, and which through *blindness*, from birth or accident, had never known, or ever tasted the advantages of beholding the works of God or of man in this world, shall then be opened to all the wonders of the universe; shall see all things

bearers"—as the original Hebrew word for "*lights*"—(Gen. i. 14—16) shows. It was the result of the first grand act of God's creation, three days before the sun, moon, &c. received their "ordinances" for giving light to the earth. "God said, Let there be light! And there was light." (Gen. i. 3.)

* Christ's delivering up "*the kingdom to God, even the Father,*" and God being "*all in all*" (1 Cor. xv. 24—26) refer, no doubt, to the state beyond the millennial reign; when "*the throne of God and of the Lamb,*" in union, shall *occupy the eternal city*. (See note, p. 531.)

† "*The Lamb is the light thereof*"—as if Christ, who first brought the "true light" from heaven to earth, should still, in the regenerated earth and heavenly city, be *the alone medium for transmission of all the light which illumines the New Jerusalem*; the alone medium through which all light comes from God to us, and by which all Praise rises from us to the ear of God.—"all stars shall be merged into the bright 'MORNING STAR;' all suns into the 'Sun of Righteousness.'" (See Dr. Cumming's "Apocalyptic Sketches.")

clearly and joyously, in the brightness of God's meridian countenance; and be ready to exclaim, like our blind bard, as if in anticipation of the glorious day—

“Hail, holy light! Offspring of heaven first-born!
Or of the eternal co-eternal beam,
May I express thee unblamed? Since GOD IS LIGHT!
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in Thee,
Bright effluence of bright Essence uncreate!”*

6, 7.—From this point, as before hinted (ver. 5), we have to remark the termination of all the *especially* prophetic subjects in this book of the Revelation. There only remains a kind of recapitulation and application, taken up from a time just before the millennial advent,† of several practical exhortations to the Church, to prepare in earnest for the speedy coming of her Lord.

Preceding subjects of most awakening interest had been affirmed by the heavenly messenger to John, as “*the true sayings of God*;” and especially *that of the coming of the Bridegroom, and the blessedness of all those “who shall be called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.”* Since that affirmation—which may also include the whole previous visions and

* See Milton's “Paradise Lost,” Book iii. 1—6.

† Rev. xix. 9, 10. Compare, as to the announced quick approach of the “advent,” verses 12 and 20, in this chapter.

revelations of John—he had beheld the opened heavens, the King descending to His throne, the enemies in the (Roman) earth subdued and punished, the reign of Christ and judgment of a thousand years with His (first) risen saints, the short outbreak at the loosing of Satan, the speedy putting down of the opposers and their punishment with Satan, the general resurrection and judgment of the remaining righteous and wicked, the extermination of death in this world, and the consummated glory of *the restored immortal state*.

These lofty themes are again solemnly declared, by the voice which spake to John, to be “*sayings, faithful and true ;*” not as the words of man or of created angel, but of the “*Lord God of the holy prophets,*” who had expressly “*sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done ;*” and “*Blessed would he be who should keep the sayings of this (whole) book ;*” for the *time was at hand* for all to be accomplished by Him, who saith, “*Behold, I come quickly !*”

8.—*John, also, himself* attests the reality and truth of what he saw and heard. They were no mere phantoms that had been revealed to his eyes; nor visionary words that he had heard. So affected is he with the reality of all things which had passed before him, and which had recently been declared in the announcement made by the angel, that he is again prompted to fall down

“*before his feet,*”* as if in the act of “worship,” thinking the voice and message could be none other than of *Jesus Himself!*

9.—But immediately he is undeceived, and forbidden thus to prostrate himself before the creature, the mere “*fellow-servant*”—for such the highest archangel may allow himself to be called—with all the “prophets and brethren,” (such as John) who *keep the sayings of this book*, and delight to “*worship the Lord their God, and serve Him only.*”

10, 11.—The whole “*prophecy of this book*” is shown to be so important, and its “*sayings*”—especially in the *latter chapters*—so *near at hand*, and in progress of fulfilment, that John is directed “*not to seal them up;*” for they are immediately to be published to the world and made known to the Church; and no one is to be prevented the perusal or debarred the understanding of them, as though now so difficult, or impossible to unravel, through the distance of time.† And from the closing of the range of the “*sayings of this book,*” up to

* Rev. xix. 10.

† It may be noticed here, that *Daniel*, prophesying under inspiration (about B.C. 538), concerning great events about to befall the Church of God in the earth, and extending far onwards to “*the end of the days,*” is directed differently in the remarkable vision (ch. x. 5, &c.) which he had; for it was said to him (ch. xii. 9)—“*Go thy way, Daniel! for the words are closed up and SEALED, till the time of the end.*” The reason for this is thought to be, that, in Daniel’s days “*the thing was* (equally) true, but *the time appointed* (before the accomplishment) *was long*—(ch. x. 1). Whereas in St. John’s days

the period when it is announced, "*Behold, I come quickly*"—"the time is at hand!"—it seems intimated by the angel, that few or scarcely any conversions to Christ and holiness, or change of character in any class, either of just or unjust, can take place, till the last great down-pouring of the Spirit.* "*He that is unjust, shall be unjust still! He which is filthy, shall be filthy still!—And, he that is righteous, shall be righteous still! And, he that is holy, shall be holy still!*" The "foolish" virgins, who had not obtained "oil" for their lamps, find it *too late* to seek, when "the Bridegroom" is come.

(A.D. 96), the epistles to the seven churches, and the subsequent events symbolized under the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, would have their speedy and successive fulfilment. The fact of Daniel's prophecy reaching from nearly six centuries before Christ *to the end*, and telling of the "*time, times, and a half*" (1,260 years), and then *adding* to the above date—which is supposed to terminate between B.C. 1793 and 1800—a period of *thirty years* more (ver. 11), for the further discomfiture of the "*desolation*" and "*abomination*," together with a pronounced special blessing to those who are favoured to *come to the "thousand three hundred and five and thirty years"*—(ver. 12), or seventy-five years beyond the original and marked date of 1,260—we see, how much more likely the dark "*sayings*" would be made *plain* in St. John's revelation; how much earlier the starting-point in the one case, and how much nearer is "the time of the end" in the other.

* The "*latter rain*"—we had the "*former*" and partial rain at Pentecost (Acts ii.)—seems referred to, in its fulness, about the millennial season. (Joel ii. 28—32; Jer. v. 24; xxxi. 31—34; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Zech. x. 1; xii. 10.)

How solemn and alarming a declaration is this, in the first-mentioned case, to the ungodly and unholy, the foolish and unchanged, who delay the day of repentance and of seeking the “oil” of Divine grace and faith in the “vessel” of the heart! But how cheering and comforting, on the other hand, to the “*wise virgins!*”—who, though at no time so vigilant and actively looking for their Lord, as they should be—yet have the “lamp” trimmed and the light burning, from the good supply of the holy Spirit’s anointing within, and are ready at the first note of warning, and welcomed, when the “Bridegroom cometh!”*

12, 13.—THE LORD OF THE CHURCH, whose “*Apocalypse*” it is (ch. i. 1), and who spake to John at the opening of the book (ver. 8, 11, 17), now appears, as if in person, at the close, to acknowledge His own work as its “Author and Finisher,”† and rousing by His own beloved voice, the “*slumbering and sleeping virgins,*” to prepare them forthwith for His advent! “Behold,” he repeats, “*I come quickly! My reward is with me. I will give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last!*”

14--16.—With this He assures us that He is none other than the same JESUS, who was once born at Bethlehem, of “the house and lineage of

* Matt. xxv. 1—13.

† Heb. xii. 2; Rev. v. 5.

David,” after the flesh; “*David’s offspring*,”* as to human descent, but David’s Lord and “Root,” in His Divine essence and eternal existence with the Father—“*the Light of the world*,” “*the Bright and Morning Star*.”

In the character of the ordained “Prince and Saviour,” the appointed “Judge of quick and dead” and of “*all mankind*”—mighty in power, glorious in holiness, faithful to His word—He pronounces, with high authority, *His blessing* on the one hand, and *His reprobation*, on the other. On *the one side* are the “*sheep*”—the righteous, the justified, the accepted and saved; who have believed in His merits, and obeyed the commands of their God; of whom He says—“BLESSED are they that do His commandments, that they may have right† to the tree of life, and may enter

* See Rev. ii. 28, where Christ promises to give “*the morning star*” to “*him that overcometh and keepeth His words unto the end*”—denoting what is glorious as preparatory in itself, and introductory to the day of His final glory. Now (ver. 16) He reveals Himself as “*the bright and morning star*”—not only carrying the believer’s thoughts back to “the promise” to cheer him now on earth, but forward to its fulfilment, in the heavenly brightness of rest and uninterrupted felicity.

† The “*right*”—“*εξουσια*,” “*authority*”—cannot be one of claim or meritorious deserving on man’s part, which would contradict the whole truth of the Gospel doctrine of “*salvation by grace*,” but it means *authority*, *power*, or *title*, obtained through Christ for His believing flock, to partake of the rich enjoyments of the *purchased inheritance* in eternal life. (See John i. 12, where the same Greek word is used as above.)

in through the gates into the city !” On *the other side* are the “*goats*”—the ungodly, unbelieving, unclean, unwashed by (faith in) His blood, unsanctified by the Holy Ghost; of whom He declares—

“WITHOUT are dogs,* sorcerers, whoremongers!
And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie !”

concluding the whole with an authoritative asseveration to John to confirm the faith and hope of His chosen in *the Churches* “*militant here on earth*”—

“I Jesus have sent Mine angel,
To testify unto you these things in the Churches.”

17.—As a suitable application of the whole prophecy—in its hopes and promises—its threatenings, alarms, and warnings—its Divine sanctions,

* The “*dog*,” (Heb. “*כלב*”), was not a domesticated animal in the East, as with us. It was pronounced to be “*unclean*” by the law given to Moses, and was, therefore, held in great contempt among the Jews. The most offensive expression that could be used was to compare a person to a “*dead dog*.” (1 Sam. xxiv. 14.) Nabal—the churlish and snarlish who refused provisions to David—is called, “*the son of (“caleb”) a dog*” (1 Sam. xxv. 3.) The word “*dogs*,” is applied to *false prophets* (Isa. lvi. 11 ; Phil. iii. 2)—to *sinners in general* (Prov. xxvi. 11) and (2 Peter ii. 22)—to the *violent, hurtful, and persecuting*, (Ps. xxii. 16) — to the *unholy and carnal* (Matt. vii. 6) — to “*Gentiles who know not God*” (Matt. xv. 26, 27)—*evil workers, wicked transgressors, thieves in the night, noisy disturbers of the peace, the greedy, corrupt, and bloodthirsty*—and all prowling about, like “*the roaring lion*,” seeking whom and what they may devour. (Ps. lix. 1—7.)

encouragements and consolations—in its passing “clouds and darkness,” and future beaming of “righteousness and judgment,” glory and immortality,—a most gracious INVITATION of mercy and love is addressed through the “Spirit of God” and His Church to every soul of man that will attend to and accept it:—

“The Spirit and the Bride* say, COME!
 And let him that heareth say, COME!
 And let him that is athirst, COME!
 And whosoever will, let him COME,
 And take of the water of life FREELY!”

Can we conceive anything more lovingly winning than this?—anything which better proves the willingness of the “Lord of life” that “*all should come to repentance,*”† and that not one should perish who is “*athirst,*” and desires to be saved?‡ Can there be, with this *unreserved invitation*, any decree of exclusion against any one who

* The Church, in its concentrated character of *truth, unity, and purity*, under Christ its head, bears the prominent and lovely character of “*the Bride,*” even to the end. (See ch. xix. 7—9; xxi. 2, 9.) Here, by “*the Bride*” being mentioned with “*the Spirit,*” in the blessed work of inviting the sinful and unbelieving, from all quarters, to come to Christ for salvation, it would appear that they who especially belong to the Church, “*the Bride,*” are those who not only receive and love “*the truth*” themselves, and practise it, but who also are earnest, active, and self-denying in propagating it by preaching, teaching, missions, &c.

† See 2 Peter iii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4, compared with Ezek. xviii. 23, 32, and xxxiii. 11.

hears the word and is ready to accept and obey it? The "*Holy Spirit*," and "*the Bride*"*—representing Christ's promised Comforter, and the active ministration of His Church for the welfare of souls in the whole world, during His temporary absence on the "*Father's throne*" above,—call upon sinners of every class and under all circumstances, for their good, to come to Christ, believe in God, repent of sins, and be saved! "*In every nation—now of a truth—he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.*"† The "*Spirit of God*" pleads, and strives long, with the most stubborn hearts; saying, "Be ye reconciled to God!" "*Why will ye die*" with the waters of life within your reach, and offered freely to quench your souls' parching, painful, worldly "*thirst*"? The "*Bride*" of Christ, also,—waiting continually upon the Lord in the sanctuary, dispensing lovingly the means and sacraments of grace, ministering the "*words of life*" in the ordinances,—invites *all that hear to come*, and bids all that come and hear to tell the news and bring others; so that there may be a goodly united company and a full Lord's house, with all who desire "*freely*" to take of the water of life themselves, and then encourage and induce others to COME also,‡—converting sinners from

* Isa. lv. 1; John iv. 14, vii. 37; Rev. xxi. 6.

† Acts x. 34, 35.

‡ Our Lord once said to Peter (Luke xxii. 32), "*when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren*,"—and to another (Mark v. 19),

“the error of their ways,” and so gaining “crowns of rejoicing,” and attaining the richest promises in the “*better resurrection*.”*

18.—The prophecy delivered to John is final and complete. No other is needed for the benefit or edifying of the Church in the present state. All that is necessary is here revealed. Nothing that is profitable is omitted. A fearful responsibility, therefore, is declared to be incurred, by any one who shall presume, under the pretence of inspiration, or from other causes, to “*add to this*,”† to make any supplemental revelation as if from God, in addition “*to the words of the prophecy of this book*.” If he dare to do so, “*God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book!*”—He shall be numbered amongst the enemies of Christ; consigned to the place prepared for all the wicked; and shall never be permitted to taste of the happiness of the heavenly “kingdom.”

19.—Again, if any one shall deny the truth, or detract from the credibility and glory of the “words of this prophecy,” it will be evident that he has no real reverence whatever for any part of

“*Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee* ;”—instances, like the passage before us, which show the importance of remembering that “*having freely received*,” we should all be ready “*freely to give*” (Matt. x. 8), and do something in bringing others to Christ (John i. 45, 46).

* James v. 19, 20; 1 Thes. ii. 19; Phil. iii. 7—11; 2 Tim. iv. 5—8.

† See Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32; and Prov. xxx. 5, 6.

the book of God, no trust in the teaching of the Divine and Holy Spirit, no faith in the promises, and no confidence in the infinite wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Therefore, the denunciation against such a wilful despiser of this best and grandest, this *last and most complete Revelation* of the mysteries of the Divine will, shall have no part nor lot in “*the book of life*,” he shall not be suffered to enter into the “holy city” of the redeemed; nor to partake of any of the rich promises to “the faithful,” which are “written in this book.”

20.—The Church is, finally, reminded—in the “conclusion of the whole matter”—that it is JESUS, her beloved Lord and Saviour, who “*testifies*” *all these things*. “This Witness is true!” He cannot be mistaken! He cannot raise false hopes! He cannot mislead or deceive! What He reveals must be good as well as true! What He declares to be true must be profitable, and worthy of belief, obedience, gratitude, praise!—for all eternity!

Again: with the last breath of His parting and loving testimony, here placed on indelible record by His faithful disciple John, He affirms and declares—*solemnly* to the careless and unbelieving, but *cheerfully* to the trustful and longing heart—“BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!”

May our ready and willing response to the

blissful announcement be like that of “the Bride” to her “Beloved”—

“AMEN! EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!”—

*“Make haste, my Beloved! and be Thou like to a roe,
Or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.”**

21.—The *apostolic benediction* well concludes† the whole of this most marvellous and glorious book of prophecy,—with which also the writer, without further comment, would take leave of each gentle and patient reader,—saying,

“THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE
WITH YOU ALL! AMEN!”

“GLORY TO GOD on high!
Father of earth and sky,
In WHOM we live!
O Life of all that move,
For Thy creating love,
The care we daily prove—
Our thanks we give!

But on that love which gave
THINE ONLY SON to save
Our souls from hell!—
Ye worlds that roll in space,
Ye hosts before His face,
Ye favoured, ransomed race,
For ever dwell!

* Cant. viii. 14. † Rom. xvi. 20; 2 Thes. iii. 18, &c.

“All hail, REDEEMING LORD!
By heavenly hosts adored,
Ere time began!
Who worthily can tell,
Of men on earth who dwell,
Or angels that excel,—
THY LOVE TO MAN?”

Let earth and heaven combine,
To praise in strains divine,
THE GREAT I AM!
Shout, all ye angel-throng!
Re-echo, earth, the song!
Ye saints, the strain prolong!—
“WORTHY THE LAMB!”

All hail, THOU SPIRIT BLEST!
Our life, our peace, our rest,
In earth's brief hour!
Our hearts shall ceaseless bless,
Our holy lives express,
Our lips aloud confess—
THY CLEANSING POWER!

To God the Father, Son,
And Spirit, THREE IN ONE,
Our songs we raise!
Glory to God on high!
Glory from earth and sky!
Let men with angels vie—
IN ENDLESS PRAISE!”

Amen.

APPENDIX No. I.

To note †, p. 341, Rev. xiv. 8, containing reasons and proofs for believing that the New Testament "BABYLON" is *Rome and the Papacy* :—

1.—All commentators, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, ancient as well as modern—excepting such as futurist "*Brethren*"—admit the fact that, in some sense or other, "*Babylon*" is *Rome*. (See Rev. S. Garratt's "Commentary," p. 275.)

2.—*It cannot mean literal "Babylon,"* because that "great city" has been "swept with the besom of destruction" now full two thousand years! (Dan. v. 30; Jer. li. 37—58.)

3.—*It cannot mean any Babylon* to be rebuilt on the same site, for the great city was *never rebuilt* and restored to power, yet the "*Babylon*," existing in St. John's days, was explained and pointed out to him as then "*reigning over the kings of the earth*." (Rev. xvii. 5, 18.)

4.—*It cannot mean literal Jerusalem*, or, "*where our Lord was crucified*," or "*Sodom*," or "*Egypt*"—referring, "*spiritually*," to all classes and characters of opponents of the truth of God and adversaries of His holy name—because the "*great city*," seen and existing in John's days (A.D. 96), had power in *killing God's (Christian) "witnesses"*, which neither of the above places could then possibly have. "*Jerusalem*" was lying "in the dust," "*Sodom*" was *extinct*, "*Egypt*" assumed no great hostility nor interference with the Church of Christ.

5.—*It could not mean merely "Rome pagan,"* as the Papists affirm; because the "*names of blasphemy*" inscribed on "*the woman*," representing "*the great city*," (Rev. xvii. 18), and

"mystery," cannot apply to *paganism*, but must be referred to a *corruption and perversion of Christianity*—to a system which has the "*name of godliness*," but which virtually "*denies*" the power of the Spirit, desecrates the "*mystery*" of God's sacramental ordinances by *transubstantiation*, and unaccountably *forbids the cup to the laity*, oppressing the consciences and religious liberties of mankind.

6.—Further: Pagan Rome did not fall, as a city, *never to be found again* (Rev. xviii. 21), nor had she in her "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of *all* that were slain," for the cause of Christ, under Roman sway.

7.—Again: The fall of the great city "*Babylon*," of the Apocalypse, occurs towards the close of the Revelation, after many previous remarkable visions, reaching historically from John's days, nearly to the end; whereas, *pagan Rome* fell from its heathenism to nominal Christianity between A.D. 313 and 332. If *pagan Rome* alone is the "*great Babylon*," then a dead and unaccountable blank occurs in the predictions of the Apocalypse for upwards of 1,500 years. But the city is seen destroyed without hope of recovery (Rev. xvii. and xviii), just before the millennium (Rev. xx.), and introductory to the universal blessedness of the redeemed, when "the tabernacle of God is with men." (Rev. xxi. and xxii.)

8.—*Positive proofs* are not wanting to show the appropriateness of inspired prophecy in choosing the name "*Babylon the Great*" for apostate Rome.

Incidentally, it may be observed that—

- (1) It would not have been safe, in St. John's days, to have mentioned the name of the city *Rome*, with reprobation, as in the Apocalypse, on account of Rome's great persecuting power against Christians and all believers. (See 1 Peter v. 13.)

Also, (2) *Ancient Babylon* was the great seat of an universal empire which grievously oppressed God's people: *so is Rome*.

- (3) *Ancient Babylon* was “full of idols:” so is *Rome*.
- (4) *Ancient Babylon* spared neither age nor sex, infant or suckling, in the invasion of Judea and assault upon Jerusalem: neither did Rome in her crusades against “heretics,” the faithful “people of God.”
- (5) *Ancient Babylon* desecrated, at idolatrous feasts, the sacred vessels of the “temple” of God. And, does not Rome “make void” the word of God by her “traditions,” by shutting it up, and profaning the most holy feast, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, by “transubstantiation,” carrying about the “Host” to be worshipped, &c.?
- (6) *Ancient Babylon* fell suddenly and irrecoverably, by the hand of an unseen enemy: so it is foretold of the modern “great seven-hilled city.” (Rev. xviii. 2, 8. 17, 21.)
- (7) When *ancient Babylon* fell, under Cyrus, Israel was soon restored from captivity, and the second temple was rebuilt, in which Christ Himself, “the Messenger of the covenant,” appeared: so, in the ruin of modern Rome, great liberty will be felt and enjoyed by all classes in Christendom and Judaism: the Jews (as has been shown) will be restored and reinstated in *their own land*; Jerusalem and its temple will be rebuilt, and the Lord, “the Desire of all nations,” the Messiah, the “Delight” of His people, will “suddenly come to His temple.” (See Rev. xix. &c., compared with Mal. iii. 1, 2, and Hag. ii. 6—9.)
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APPENDIX No. II.

To note †, p. 453, Rev. xix. 8, showing a comparative synopsis of terms applied in the Apocalypse to distinguish between the true Church of Christ and "saved" members, and the false, apostate, and "lost."

<i>Terms for the True Church and "Saved."</i>	<i>Terms for the False, Apostate Church, and "Lost."</i>
Kings and priests to God and the Father i. 6	Nicolaitanes ii. 6
Faithful martyrs, all who eat of hidden manna, &c. ii. 13	Synagogue of Satan ii. 9
Crowned elders iv. 4	Holder of Balaam's doc- trine ii. 14
Kings and priests, to reign on the earth v. 10	Jezebel, the seducing pro- phetess ii. 20
144,000 true "Israel," sealed out of "twelve tribes" vii. 4	Not sealed in forehead .. ix. 4
Countless white-robed multi- tude vii. 9	The impenitent remnant ix. 20, 21
The worshippers in the mea- sured temple, altar, &c. ... xi. 1	The Gentiles, in outer court xi. 2
Two witnesses, two olive trees, two candlesticks, &c. ... xi. 3, 4	Beast, out of bottomless pit xi. 7
The holy city xi. 2	Street of the great city .. xi. 8
God's servants, the prophets and saints xi. 18	Destroyers of the earth .. xi. 18
Sun-clothed Woman and Woman's child xii. 1, 5	Seven-headed and ten- horned dragon xii. 3

<i>Terms for the True Church and "Saved."</i>	<i>Terms for the False, Apostate Church, and "Lost."</i>
Rev. Woman in the wilderness...xii. 6	Rev. The deceived worldxii. 9
Michael and angelsxii. 7	Dragon and angelsxii. 7
"Remnant" of Woman's seed, who "keep the com- mandments of God," &c. xii. 17	Dragon and serpent ..xii. 9, 15
The saints who have patience and faithxiii. 10	Beast, with name of Blas- phemy, speaking great things..... xiii. 1, 5
"Lamb," with 144,000 on Mount Zion, having the Father's name in their foreheads xiv. 1	Worshippers of beast, names not written in "book of life"xiii. 8
Harpers on Zion, "virgins," redeemed from earth, singing "the new song" xiv. 3	Not knowing "the new song" of the redeemed.. xiv. 3
The blessed, "dying in the Lord"xiv. 13	They who drink of God's wrath.....xiv. 10
Harpers "on sea of glass" victorious xv. 2	Not able to enter temple .. xv. 8
Kings of the East (Jewish Church)xvi. 12	Blasphemers of the God of heaven..... xvi. 4
The watchful, who keep their garmentsxvi. 15	Shedding the blood of saints and prophets xvi. 6
Saints and martyrs of Jesus xvii. 6	Great city Babylon, and great whore ..xvi. 19; xvii. 1
Those "with the Lamb"— "called, chosen, faithful" xvi. 14	Making "war with the Lamb"xvii. 14
People of God, called out of Babylonxviii. 4	Babylon the great, the reigning (universal) city xvii. 18
Heaven, holy apostles and prophets, rejoicing over Babylon's fallxviii. 20	Kings, merchants, mariners of the earth, lament- ingxviii. 9-19
People singing Alleluia ..xix. 1	Corrupters of the earth, murderersxix. 2
The Bride, Lamb's Wife xix. 7	Beast, and false prophet..xix. 20
Kings upon thrones, souls of martyrs, &c..... xx. 4	Worshippers of beast, and image, and having his markxx. 4

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ERRATA.

- Page 43 (note).—For “Domitian, A.D. 95,” read, *Diocletian*,
A.D. 303—313.
- „ 50 (note).—For “Moabites,” read, *Midianites*.
- „ 276 (note).—For “A.D. 553,” read, A.D. 533.
- „ 286 (text).—For “resound,” read, *rebound*.
- „ 323 (text).—For “creatures,” read, *creature*.”
- „ 504 (note).—For “beatific,” read, *beatific*.

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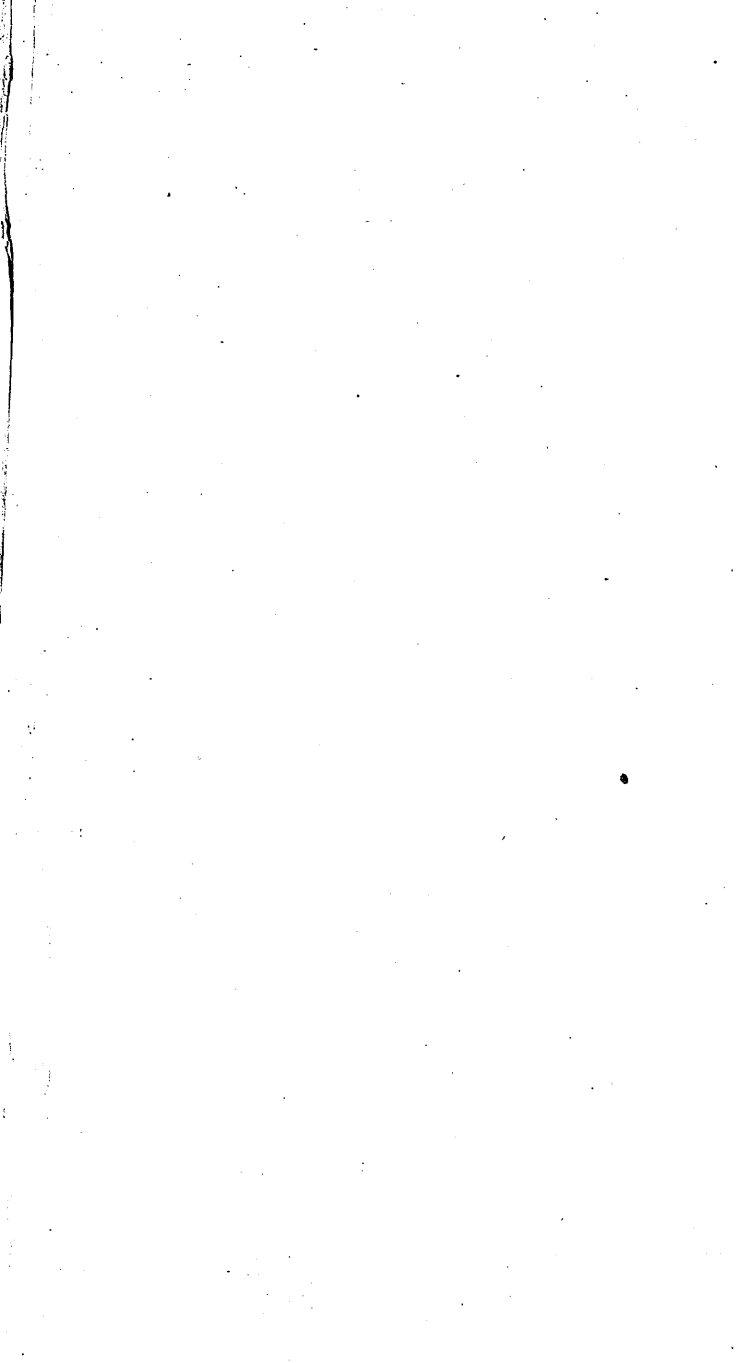
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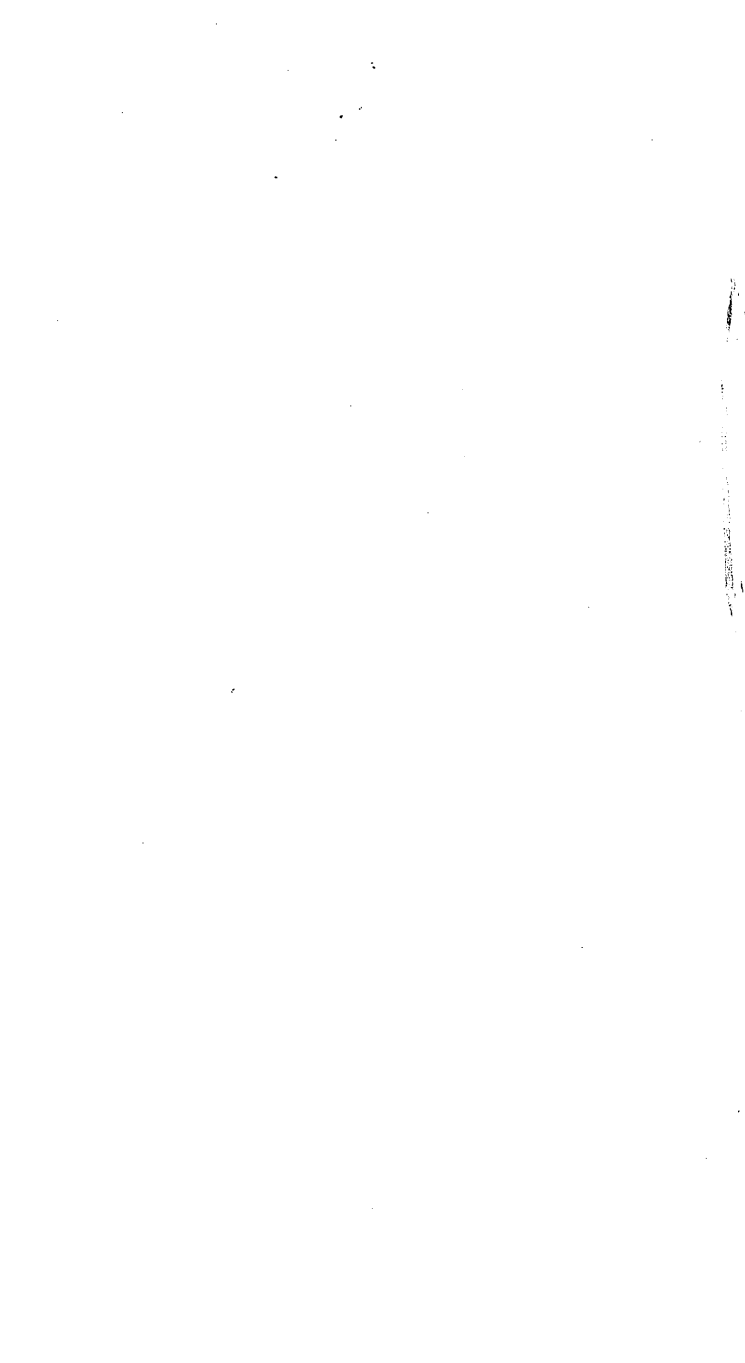
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